

# **The Cuban University Under The Revolution**

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## CUBAN AMERICAN NATIONAL FOUNDATION

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[On the cover: The University of Havana, established 1728.]

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	i
INTRODUCTION .....	1
THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FORMATION OF	
THE CUBAN NATION .....	3
The Struggle Against Dictatorship .....	4
The Battle for Democracy .....	6
The Failure of the Democratic Experiment in the 1940s .....	8
Castro and the Politics of Revolution .....	9
THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE	
CASTRO REGIME .....	12
The Promise of Democracy .....	13
The Regime Confronts and Controls the University .....	14
HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZED	
REGIME .....	21
<i>Perfeccionamiento</i> .....	21
The "New" University and Student Organizations .....	24
University Enrollments in the 1970s .....	25
University Admissions and Student Life .....	30
Censorship and Intellectual Control .....	33
The Absence of Academic Freedom .....	36
AMERICAN SCHOLARS' RESEARCH IN CUBA .....	39
CONCLUSION .....	46
<i>Appendix 1: Articles 38-39 of the Cuban Constitution</i> .....	51
<i>Appendix 2: Sample Research Questionnaire</i> .....	53
NOTES .....	57



## PREFACE

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## INTRODUCTION

The 1976 Cuban Constitution and particularly its Article 38 (a full text of which is found in Appendix 1 of this essay) formally guarantees every Cuban citizen the right to education, investigation, and artistic creativity. This constitutional language and the oft-cited figures indicating high enrollment and substantial state expenditures on education provide a very skewed and unrealistic picture of the Cuban educational system, however. Crucial to understanding the nature of the educational system and of the role that schools and universities play therein are the ways these rights are conditioned by and subordinated to the state. Not only does the Cuban Constitution enshrine a "Marxist-Leninist" world-view, it asserts the absolute primacy of the state. Article 38 is absolutely clear on this issue: "The state," it says, "orients, foments, and promotes education, culture, and the sciences in all their manifestations." "Education," it goes on, "is a function of the state." "Artistic creation," another part of Article 38 declares, "is free only as long as its content is not contrary to the Revolution."

Such language dictates the instrumental and politicized view of education held by the present Cuban regime. Simply put, although Cuba is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and claims to defend the rights of man, its government does not view the rights to intellectual inquiry and artistic creativity as inherent to individuals. Neither does it view free intellectual inquiry as desirable. There is only one correct world-view, and all persons and institutions are to be judged in terms of whether they support and help to extend it. How individuals relate to each other and what their rights and obligations are within the political community are issues to be decided by the state and the Communist Party, without recourse to such outmoded and "manipulable" instruments as liberty of expression or free elections.

This effort to expand the realm of power of the state and to penetrate, control, and mold society is evident in all aspects of Cuban society, but it is nowhere brought more sharply into focus than in the world of education and culture. Marxist-Leninist principles and the rapaciousness of state-socialism have legitimized the systematic violation of the rights of those writers, poets, and teachers (like Heberto Padilla, Angel Cuadra, Armando Valladares, Ariel Hidalgo, and Ricardo Bofill) who have dared to think differently from the reigning orthodoxy. These individuals (and many other ordinary citizens) have suffered imprisonment and the deprivation of basic human rights, all for the sake of a system whose principal accomplishment, in Cuba and elsewhere, has been to extend the reach of



the state and its repressive organs far beyond what had ever been imagined possible.

In Cuba, the same tragic fate has befallen the university — the institution where, according to Western tradition, free inquiry should be institutionalized and encouraged. To increase the size of the university system and to lower those barriers which prevented the less privileged from acquiring a university education, as has been done in Cuba since 1959, is undoubtedly a positive development, but its costs and the perversion of values it implies must also be understood. Reform of the university and increasing its relevance to society and national development are of little use if the state and its ruling elite consciously and systematically do little more than pursue policies which extend and reinforce controls over university, society, and individuals.

This essay will analyze the role of the university in contemporary Cuban society. The first section will seek to place the university in historical context, examining its development as well as its role in the process of Cuban national formation from the 19th century until Castro's seizure of power in January 1959. The second section will describe the measures undertaken during the first two decades of Castro's rule with respect to the university. It will also evaluate the more recent interaction between the university, the state, and the Cuban Communist Party (PCC). The third and fourth sections will explore the dilemmas confronting higher education in Cuba today and also analyze the opportunities for and limits to exchange programs between Cuban and United States universities. The conclusion will speculate on the future of the Cuban university, evaluating its prospects in light of the "rectification campaign" under way on the island since early 1986.

## THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FORMATION OF THE CUBAN NATION

The development of the modern Cuban nation has been inextricably bound to the university. It has played a crucial role in the formation of a national consciousness, and its students and faculty have played a crucial role in political life and reform movements since the 19th century. The focus of this activity was the University of Havana, an institution which until the mid-20th century was the only national center of Cuban higher education. Founded in 1728 (on the North American continent only Harvard, Yale, and William & Mary are older), the University of Havana became a secular institution in 1842, and in subsequent decades became a "hothouse of anti-Spanish sentiment."<sup>1</sup> The November 1871 execution of eight medical students for their alleged role in the desecration of a Spanish officer's grave helped galvanize nationalist sentiment throughout the island, forging a bond between the university, intellectuals, and the emerging national political community.<sup>2</sup> Such leaders in the struggle for independence as Carlos Manuel de Céspedes and Ignacio Agramonte were graduates of the University of Havana. José Martí, the apostle of the Cuban nation who died fighting the Spaniards in 1895, played a key role in this regard. Although he was not a graduate of the University of Havana, Martí came to personify the connection between the intellectual community and the emergent nation. Committing himself to the cause of Cuban independence, Martí provided an impetus to the incorporation of Cuban intellectuals (and, more broadly, the university) into the country's political life.

With many of its students and some of its faculty drawn into the vortex of the independence struggle against Spain, the University of Havana became the intellectual nerve-point for those with visions of how the new Cuba should be organized and directed. In a pattern sadly reminiscent of other countries' experiences in the 19th and 20th centuries, however, independence, when attained in 1902, brought with it neither the fulfillment of those hopes nor the arrival of a new era. Politics remained in many ways venal; corruption and clientelism did not disappear but rather ensnared the new political class. Furthermore, the Platt Amendment (in force from 1902 through 1934) made Cuba a second-class nation by providing a legal pretext for United States intervention in domestic Cuban affairs. By the late 1920s, moreover, the rule of law itself became imperiled as Gerardo Machado established a dictatorship. (Constitutionally elected president in 1924, he extended his term in 1927, rigged his re-election in 1928, and ruled as dictator until his overthrow in 1933.)



The regeneration of society as well as the affirmation of national identity and independence became recurrent themes in Cuba during the first decades of the 20th century. To these demands, university activists incorporated others which focused more explicitly on the university and on the role it should play in national development. The program for university reform emphasized modernization of the curriculum (with an emphasis on disciplines other than law or medicine), the preparation of specialists in technical fields, and the notion of providing access to the university for the less privileged strata of society, in particular workers and those living in rural areas. They linked these and other reform proposals, which called for life-long faculty tenure and greater student participation in the university decision-making process, to a more general demand for *autonomía universitaria*. It was hoped that the implementation of the latter would insulate the university from government pressures and provide an atmosphere for free intellectual inquiry.

The demands for university reform and for the regeneration of Cuban society were voiced with increasing urgency in the years after independence. They received an impetus from several developments during the 1920s. One circumstance was the university reform movement which originated in Córdoba, Argentina, in 1918 and whose impact was felt over the next decade throughout Latin America.<sup>3</sup> Its demands for university self-rule, open enrollment, and academic freedom found an echo in the University of Havana, contributing directly to the birth of the Cuban University Reform Movement in 1923. The second occurrence which affected the Cuban university was a deepening economic and political crisis whose most visible manifestations were increased labor unrest and the establishment of the Machado dictatorship. The third was the growth of anti-American sentiment, a resentment fueled by Cuba's evident economic dependence on the United States as well as by the abridgement of sovereignty implied by the Platt Amendment.

### The Struggle Against Dictatorship

Political turbulence increased during the Machado dictatorship, with nationalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist ideas gaining ground among intellectuals and in the University of Havana in particular. The University's size, location, and prestige afforded national prominence to those within it who were politically active. A sharp rise in the politicization of the University of Havana occurred in 1923 with the aforementioned Reform Movement. Julio Antonio Mella (1903-1929), a student in the Faculty of Law and later a founding member of the Cuban Commu-

nist Party (PCC),<sup>4</sup> emerged as the university movement's leader, becoming president of the *Federación Estudiantil Universitaria* (FEU) and organizing the First National Congress of Cuban Students. Mella did not view university reform in narrow, corporate terms. For him, change in the University implied change for society as a whole. To this end and in an effort to compensate for what he saw as the insufficiencies of existing university education, he founded the José Martí Popular University whose aim was the education of workers. Mella died in 1929 under mysterious circumstances in Mexico,<sup>5</sup> but his activist legacy and the role the FEU came to play under his leadership created the conditions for the student movement's subsequent and more intense involvement in Cuba's political life.

Beginning in 1927, when he presented the Cuban Senate with a bill to modify the Constitution and allow him to run for re-election, Gerardo Machado had moved openly toward consolidation of dictatorial power. His effort provoked popular unrest, especially at the University of Havana, where anti-Machado strikes and demonstrations became the order of the day. Machado subsequently closed the University and dissolved the FEU, but these measures, far from pacifying the situation, only ignited it. In what was to become a standard response to official repression in Cuba, dissident university activists organized a clandestine *Directorio Estudiantil Universitario* (DEU) whose objectives were the ouster of Machado and the implementation of sweeping economic and social reform. Anti-Machado sentiment among university students and faculty rose to new heights after the death of a *Directorio* leader during a protest demonstration at the University in September 1930. Thereafter, the University became a focal point for the anti-Machado struggle, with students (Antonio Guiteras and Eduardo Chibás from the Generation of 1927, and Carlos Prío Socarrás, Raúl Roa, and Justo Carrillo from that of 1930)<sup>6</sup> and professors (Ramón Grau San Martín) in the front line of the opposition. Machado again closed the University from 1930 until 1933, but this again did little to smother the flames of revolt. Driven underground, the opposition resorted to violence, and students and professors suffered arrest and imprisonment.

The students and faculty at the University of Havana played a key role in Machado's overthrow in August 1933. A month after his ouster, having joined forces with a military faction headed by army sergeant Fulgencio Batista, the *Directorio* and several other organizations whose ranks had been nourished by university activists overthrew the provisional government headed by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. Several days later, on September 10, 1933, they named Ramón Grau San Martín



(formerly a professor in the Faculty of Medicine) to head the revolutionary government; this regime was never recognized by the United States. Five weeks after taking power, his government granted the student movement's oldest demand: university autonomy. Decree No. 2059 removed the University of Havana from the Ministry of Education's jurisdiction, while also setting aside 2 percent of the national budget for higher education. The latter measure had a double edge. On the one hand, it provided financial security for the University; on the other, it meant that, despite administrative autonomy, the University remained financially dependent on the government. In any case, Grau resigned soon after, in January 1934, victimized by internal dissension and conspiracy as well as severe pressure from the United States.

### The Battle for Democracy

Flushed with success from having helped to overthrow Machado, students and recent graduates of the University of Havana looked forward to the fulfillment of their dreams of national regeneration. Soon, however, these hopes were dashed. Although from these university leaders would subsequently emerge many future political leaders (among them, a president as well as numerous congressmen and senators — in short, the men who would dominate Cuban politics for the next three decades), the 1930s were unkind to their early idealism. The unity of purpose which had brought the university community together during the anti-Machado struggle disappeared as these activists confronted the crude realities of power. A difficult political situation confronted present and former student activists. On the one hand, they considered the governments which followed Grau San Martín's to be illegitimate, as having betrayed the ideals of the anti-Machado struggle. But the student leaders of the time and their heirs during the next decade also proved incapable of dislodging them. Not only were many Cubans tired of the hyper-politicization of the late 1920s and early 1930s but these governments enjoyed the clear support of the United States as well as of the Cuban army and, more specifically, Fulgencio Batista.

Those who had been university student leaders in the late 1920s and early 1930s divided over what tactics to employ under the new situation. One strain opted for integration into the emerging political system. Many of the former *Directorio* activists founded the *Partido Revolucionario Cubano (Auténtico)*, a party whose program mixed liberal, populist, and social-democratic ideas in its advocacy of economic and political nationalism, greater social justice, strong trade unions, and civil liberties. Initially very hostile to the Batista-controlled governments, the *Auténti-*

*cos* slowly accommodated to the new situation, eventually reaching a *modus vivendi* with it. The *Auténticos* participated in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1940, played an active role in the elaboration of the new Constitution, and in 1944 elected Ramón Grau San Martín to the presidency.

A second, more minoritarian view was also evident among those activists. This one rejected accommodation with the post-Machado governments. For them, the ideals and objectives of the anti-Machado struggle had been betrayed and the cause of national regeneration abandoned. Perhaps one of the most representative figures of this nationalist idealism was Antonio Guiteras, a former student leader and Minister of the Interior in the first (1933-34) Grau San Martín government. He founded a clandestine revolutionary organization — *Joven Cuba* — whose political base was at the University of Havana. The recently granted *autonomía universitaria* allowed the campus to serve as a refuge for political activists, one from which the police were barred from entering. Seeing itself as the keeper of the nationalist flame in Cuba, *Jóven Cuba* drew on the tradition of urban violence developed by the university movement during the later stages of the anti-Machado struggle in its efforts to spark a national insurrection, this time against Batista.

After nearly a year of anti-government protests and strikes throughout Cuba, matters finally came to a head during a general strike in March 1935. The strike found a strong echo in the University, but it was easily and brutally put down. Hundreds of labor and student activists felt the weight of the repression, and Guiteras himself died at the hands of the police in May 1935. The failure of this general strike effectively marked the end of the anti-Machado revolutionary period. It also closed a chapter in the history of the Cuban university movement. In the strike's aftermath, Batista closed the University of Havana and, when it opened again in 1937, not only had the FEU been reorganized but political activism had also visibly declined. Less evident was the existence of a political temper which legitimated violence. This legacy of the anti-Machado struggle would rear its head again in the 1940s and 1950s.

As the 1930s drew to a close, however, the university student movement had been tamed and many of its leaders co-opted. Politics also seemed ready to enter a more ordinary and less violent phase. The provisions of the Constitution of 1940 would make it among the most progressive in Latin America. Not only were extensive worker rights and civil liberties guaranteed by this document, but the autonomy of the University of Havana was given constitutional sanction. With Batista's acceptance of constitutional procedure, the *Auténticos* acquiesced to his



election as president in late 1940 on a ticket which had the support of the Communist party. The onset of World War II (Cuba followed the United States lead in declaring war on the Axis Powers) and the ensuing war against fascism also contributed to the climate of domestic collaboration and accommodation.

### The Failure of the Democratic Experiment in the 1940s

The tranquility did not last long. And neither did peace in the university. The election of Grau San Martín in 1944, to be followed in 1948 by another *Auténtico*, Carlos Prío Socarrás, a former leader of the *Directorio*, resulted neither in the consolidation of Cuban democracy nor in the improvement of the educational system. There were, it is true, some advances with respect to higher education. The Prío Socarrás Administration enacted some university reforms. During his term, Prío Socarrás founded two more state universities, with campuses opening in Santiago de Cuba (1947) and in Santa Clara (1948), and the Cuban Congress approved legislation allowing for the establishment of private universities. Such measures were positive and, most especially in the case of the former, improved the chances for access to a university education for those living outside the Havana metropolis, but they were not accompanied by systematic efforts to modernize the curriculum further or to encourage a shift in the focus of enrollment from the status-oriented faculties of law and medicine.

The Cuban university had entered a period of visible decline by the early 1940s. Its politicization during and after the Machado dictatorship had taken a toll: the university became merely another arena where individuals could gain their political spurs and national prominence. Periodic efforts to raise academic standards and to redirect the university's energies were not lacking, but these could not stem the tide. Cuba had an important chance to reinvigorate its higher education system in the late 1930s and early 1940s with the influx of numerous Spanish Republican intellectual and literary figures but, in contrast to what happened in Mexico, the relevant authorities provided little institutional support to these individuals. The saddest demonstration of the decline in Cuban higher education occurred in the Faculty of Law, however, where violence and intimidation among students and toward professors became generalized during the 1940s, providing particularly ironic testimony of both a university and a society in crisis.

The university escaped neither corruption nor its counterpart, political violence. Gangsterism and extortion became institutionalized at the University of Havana during the 1940s. Numerous university gangs and

groups emerged in this period, many of them on the payroll of the government or of politicians. Although claiming a political motivation, many of these groups' members were rather more interested in gathering their share of the system's spoils. They were in turn drawn to violence not only by a sense of adventure and *machismo* but because it heightened their political profile as well as their chances for making money. University violence became a generalized phenomenon under Grau San Martín in the mid-1940s, but it was during Prío Socarrás' term in office (1948-52) that organized, violent gangs — known as "action groups" or "*bonches*" — reached their apogee, especially in the Faculty of Law. University autonomy and political connections sheltered rival gangs from the police, and the University of Havana lost much of its claim to be a seat for higher learning.

The crisis in the University was part and parcel of a more general social and political crisis which had become dramatically evident during the Prío Socarrás administration. Public confidence and esteem for government fell; frustration and disillusion increased. The *Auténticos*, once the hope for democratic reform, had become ensnared by corruption and clientelism. Personal rivalries and frustration with the corruption of the *Auténtico* government led Eduardo Chibás and other *Auténtico* dissidents to form the *Partido del Pueblo Cubano (Ortodoxo)*. Chibás' call for reform and national regeneration placed him and his movement firmly within the tradition which had animated the university movement both during the struggle for independence against Spain and in the 1920s during the fight against Machado. By 1950, the *Ortodoxos* — whose electoral symbol was a broom with which to sweep out corruption — were a strong political force, attracting a large student following at the University of Havana and elsewhere. Chibás' suicide in 1951 removed a powerful reformist voice and created a vacuum on the political scene.

### Castro and the Politics of Revolution

Fidel Castro entered the maelstrom of Cuban politics in this atmosphere.<sup>7</sup> He began his studies in the Faculty of Law at the University of Havana in 1945. Never a prominent student leader,<sup>8</sup> Castro nevertheless associated himself with a number of student gangs and participated in inter-university violence. Some sources implicate him in the murder of a rival student leader, Manolo Castro, in 1948.<sup>9</sup> Ideology did not seem to motivate him particularly,<sup>10</sup> but he exhibited then as now a commitment both to activist involvement and to personal leadership. Castro began his political career at the University, becoming involved in several abortive revolutionary efforts outside Cuba — among them, the 1948 riots in



Colombia known as the *Bogotazo* and in the organization of an expeditionary force against Rafael Trujillo, dictator in the Dominican Republic. After his graduation from the University, Castro joined the *Ortodoxo* party, becoming one of its candidates to the House of Representatives in the 1952 election. Batista's *coup* ended Cuba's experiment with constitutional democracy. In its wake, a split developed among the *Ortodoxos* over whether or not to pursue revolutionary action. A minority within the party (to which Castro belonged) espoused such a course, and Castro soon turned to revolutionary conspiracy and the preparations for what was to be the July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada barracks in Oriente province.

Castro returned to the University of Havana (which was then still protected by the constitutional grant of autonomy) to prepare his attack. Interestingly, neither then nor later was he able to attract much university student support for his insurrectionary efforts. Initially, a few students joined his group, but by the time of the attack on Moncada, they had all dropped out. The FEU allowed Castro to store arms and to begin his group's military training at the University, but they maintained their distance from him. The distrust between Castro and the university student movement did not diminish in the years after Moncada. Indeed, Castro's 26th of July Movement (so named for the date of the Moncada assault) and the university student movement (organized both in the FEU and in a clandestine *Directorio*) became the most important foci of opposition to the regime and, as such, were fierce rivals for leadership in the struggle against Batista.

The Moncada attack, although a failure in military terms, gave Castro a strong and positive public image. Jailed for a year and a half, he was subsequently amnestied and went into Mexican exile in 1955, there to plan his next revolutionary venture. Others (among them, the deposed president, Carlos Prío Socarrás, and numerous *Auténtico* leaders) were in exile, too, conspiring against the Batista regime. In Cuba, the political opposition to Batista centered, as it had against Machado, among the university students. By the mid-1950s, the FEU at the University of Havana represented 17,000 students; it drew strength from those numbers as well as from the University's central and strategic location.

Mindful of his experience during the 1930s, Batista approached the university movement with caution in the early years of his regime, seeking to infiltrate and take control of the FEU. These efforts failed. Over time, protests and demonstrations at the University of Havana only intensified, with students demanding the return to constitutionality and the rule of law. By the mid-1950s, the University of Havana was at the

center of the political storm. Ironically, this circumstance also afforded the regime the opportunity to focus the full fury of its repressive energies on the university movement. As a result, by the time Castro was released from jail in 1955, most of the FEU leadership was in the hospital or under arrest. In response, what remained of the FEU formed a clandestine organization in February 1956 — the *Directorio Revolucionario* — to direct the opposition to the Batista regime. FEU President José Antonio Echevarría became the *Directorio*'s leader and, like so many youthful idealists of the time, an aspirant to the revolutionary, nationalist mantle of José Martí.<sup>11</sup>

Soon after his appointment as head of the *Directorio*, Echevarría traveled to Mexico where he met Castro and signed an accord to coordinate their separate operations against Batista. Not much cooperation resulted from this so-called "Mexican Letter" agreement. When members of the *Directorio* assassinated the head of the Military Intelligence Service in October 1956, Castro expressed criticism of this action. Later, in December, Castro and his group landed in Oriente province from the yacht *Granma*. Apparently, as part of the agreement reached in Mexico between Castro and the *Directorio*, Castro had agreed to inform the student leaders of his plans so that they could undertake coincident actions at the University. Ultimately, however, neither side overcame its distrust of the other. Whether because of willful or accidental lapses, there was no coordinated uprising.<sup>12</sup> Castro's landing in December 1956 did not spark a national revolt, and no other opposition party or movement followed his lead. Army troops routed his expeditionary force, and its remnants took up the fight in the Sierra Maestra.

Politics had clearly overshadowed education at the University of Havana by late 1956. Following the events in Oriente province (the 26th of July Movement there under the leadership of Frank País had tried to mount an urban uprising to precede Castro's landing), the Havana University Council suspended classes. What was initially viewed as a temporary closure soon became more permanent: not until January 1959 did the University of Havana reopen. The closure did not diminish the university movement's involvement in national politics. Quite the opposite. It freed thousands of students so they could participate even more actively in the struggle against Batista.

In an effort to take the lead in the anti-Batista struggle, the *Directorio* organized an attack on the presidential palace on March 13, 1957, with the objective of assassinating Batista. Although it came very close to achieving the objective, the operation failed. Instead, many *Directorio* activists, including José Antonio Echevarría, were killed and the organi-



zation was decimated. The consequences of this failure were profound: the university movement found itself leaderless, relegated to a distinctly secondary role in the anti-Batista opposition. The mantle of this leadership passed or, more precisely, was taken up by Fidel Castro and his 26th of July Movement. Other groups were, of course, involved in this struggle. But for many Cubans, Castro now came to represent and personify their longing for a return to democracy. Promising a return to the Constitution of 1940 and a new, reinvigorated nationalist vision, Castro was widely preferred to those older politicians whose image had been tarnished by corruption and malfeasance during the 1940s and early 1950s.

### THE UNIVERSITY AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE CASTRO REGIME

Broad sympathy and great popular enthusiasm greeted Fidel Castro when he marched triumphantly into Havana early in January 1959, a few days after Fulgencio Batista fled the island. The promise of a return to constitutional rule had galvanized popular energies and hopes. No sector of Cuban society looked toward the future with greater anticipation, however, than the university community. Although the *Directorio* had been decimated in 1957, university students remained in the forefront of the anti-Batista struggle, some of them nourishing the urban nuclei of Castro's 26th of July Movement and others leading a guerrilla struggle on the Escambray front. These activists and many other members of the university community were impelled by the vision of a new era, one in which a reformed and improved university would better be able to contribute to national development and progress.

Euphoria was palpable in Cuba during the first months of the new regime. The rivalries of an earlier period appeared forgotten, and a sense of national purpose had been aroused. It did not take long, however, for the clouds to gather. The change occurred as it became evident that Castro had no intention himself of sharing power with others or of acquiescing to demands that the new regime adhere to the strictures of constitutional rule. Instead, he embarked on a systematic campaign (oft-times with the aid of his former opponents in the Popular Socialist [or Communist] Party, most of whose leaders were now ready to join forces with him, at least for the short term) to consolidate his control over Cuba's social and political institutions. Castro's "Arms for What?" speech, delivered at the University of Havana in early 1959, should be understood in this context as an effort (literally) to disarm those who had

fought against Batista from outside his 26th of July Movement and who could one day challenge his hold on or claim to power.<sup>13</sup>

### The Promise of Democracy

As it did for the rest of Cuban society, the consolidation of the Castro regime and the "taming" of those institutions which challenged his authority had a profound effect on the university system and the student movement, leading to an overhaul of their administrative structures and their subjugation to the state.

Just prior to 1959, Cuba had six (private and public) universities with a total of 26,000 students. By discipline, the distribution of university enrollments showed 15.5 percent studying humanities and law, 19.7 percent education, 25.3 percent social sciences, 6.3 percent natural sciences, 13.0 percent engineering and architecture, 15.5 percent medicine, and 4.7 percent agricultural sciences. Since the Revolution, these proportions have been cited as evidence that the structure of the Cuban university, with its emphasis on careers of status (law, humanities, commerce, and medicine), was ill-designed to meet national economic and social needs. Comparisons have been made with the distribution of university enrollments during the Castro period, with a focus on the decline in the number of law students and the increase of those in pedagogy or in the agricultural sciences. Similarly, much has been written about the revolution in medicine, the dramatic improvement in the numbers of doctors, and in the reach of health services.

How should the state of the Cuban university in 1959 be evaluated? Compared to other Latin American countries, the enrollment and student distribution statistics for 1959 do not present an altogether negative picture. For example, while the number of those studying law far outweighed those enrolled in agricultural sciences, the proportion of law students in the university was lower than in most other Latin American countries.<sup>14</sup> With respect to agricultural sciences, it should be noted that relatively low enrollments corresponded to the market situation; despite the importance of the sugar industry, moreover, a career in the agricultural sciences did not guarantee a job. In defense of the university, it may also be said that its quality was quite good in comparison to other Latin American countries. The faculties of law, medicine, and architecture had first-rate reputations relative to their continental counterparts. The quality of instruction in the engineering and agronomy faculties was also high. Moreover, the cost of enrollment was quite low, and this had already increased the access of the less well-to-do to the university. This helps to explain the lower middle-class backgrounds of many university



student leaders during the 1950s.

With respect to medicine, too, the picture was nowhere near as bleak, nor the underdevelopment as profound, as some have suggested. In 1959, a respectable proportion of those enrolled in the university (15.5 percent) studied medicine, and the number of physicians in Cuba in 1958 totalled a not inconsiderable 6400 in a population of approximately six million.<sup>15</sup> Under Castro, it is true, the number of physicians has increased dramatically (in 1980, he claimed Cuba had 15,000 medical doctors), but this increase "represents something less than the rate of increase that occurred in the pre-Castro period" when the number of physicians increased from 3100 in 1948 to the aforementioned 6400 in 1958.<sup>16</sup> Cuba's population, it should also be noted, has also grown, totalling nearly ten million in 1985. All of which is not to say that the availability of health care has not increased significantly in Cuba in the last thirty years, especially in the countryside and for the less affluent sectors of the population.

Given the enormous reservoir of popular good will toward the new regime and the enthusiasm with which members of the university community viewed their role in national reconstruction, however, such improvements might well have been possible in the years after 1959, without recourse to dictatorship and the silencing of opposition.

Of course, to mention the positive dimensions to Cuban higher education in the pre-revolutionary period is not to ignore its less appealing side. The tradition of corruption and the cult of political violence which had developed during the 1940s and 1950s led more than a few university activists to see in the political struggle against Batista a ticket for future political pay-off and power. At a more structural level, there were also significant problems. Despite improvement over the preceding decade, the social background of most who enrolled in the university was middle- and upper middle-class; in disproportionate numbers, students also came from cities. Peasants and others who did not live near urban centers (they were also the ones who had experienced the greatest deficiencies and discrimination in primary and secondary education) had been under-represented in the university population. Neither did they have access to adult evening school programs through which to enhance their educational level and qualifications.

### The Regime Confronts and Controls the University

The consolidation of the Castro regime had a profound impact on the university and on the educational system more generally.

**Administrative Reform** One aspect of this reform entailed the clos-

ing of Cuba's three private universities and the restructuring of other universities so as to bring them under direct state control. In this effort, the University Reform Act of 1962 played a major role. Implemented with the active collaboration of the Popular Socialist (Communist) Party, one of whose most prominent members, Juan Marinello, became Rector of the University of Havana in 1962, the Reform destroyed the autonomy of the university system.

Although presented as the logical outgrowth and culmination of the struggles which had begun in the 1920s,<sup>17</sup> the Reform in fact emasculated what gains had been attained by the university movement since then. No longer would the university be allowed to have a special autonomous status. Neither would the hopes of those who looked forward to a university free from political pressure and intimidation be realized. Of course, the argument was not phrased crudely. There were the appropriate references to giving a new social content to education, to the need for reorienting the curriculum so there would be more scientists and teachers, people who could actively contribute to the modernization of an ostensibly underdeveloped society. But if one might not quarrel with the more technical aspects of the Reform (such as the emphasis on practical activities to complement the more theoretical studies or even the emphasis on research and experimentation in agriculture and other sciences), none of these changes could justify the subjugation of the university to the state. Loyalty to the regime was established as an admission criterion; all students were required to take courses in dialectical and historical materialism; effective student participation in the governance of the university was eliminated; and, as shall be discussed below, the FEU became an appendage of the Union of Communist Youth (UJC) and student government was crushed. Faculty tenure (and, therefore, the professoriate's institutionalized protection from the vicissitudes of politics) was abolished; literature considered to be anti-revolutionary was purged from the libraries or access to it was strictly regulated; those professors and students who did not support the Revolution were either expelled or forced to resign.<sup>18</sup>

**Student Organizations** The university student movement also felt the consequences of the consolidation of Castro's rule. Earlier in this essay, the unsteady relations between Fidel Castro and the *Directorio Estudiantil* were described. The latter's effort to assassinate Batista in March 1957 not only failed, it also led to the organization's decimation, rendering it a secondary force in the last years of the Batista regime. The university remained a focal point of the anti-Batista struggle, but from an organizational point of view, Castro's 26th of July Movement became



the real symbol of resistance. After his triumph, Castro had no intention of sharing power with any of his rivals, neither with the old-style politicians, nor even with the Communists, whose organizational skills he employed to consolidate his regime's control over various institutions but whom he never trusted. And most certainly not with the remnants of the *Directorio* or other FEU leaders, some of whom had had the temerity in early 1959 to demand their participation in the new government.

The university student movement quickly became the scene of a crucial battle between the Castro regime and its opponents. For the regime, the struggle for control over the movement was but another dimension of its efforts to destroy the university's autonomy. Having frustrated the students' demand for a share in the spoils of power, Castro moved slowly if inexorably to tighten his grip, making the FEU both a target and an instrument in his larger strategy. Castro had intervened directly in university-wide elections held in October 1959, publicly asking one candidate, Pedro Luis Boitel (a member of the urban branch of the 26th of July Movement who was condemned a year later to 42 years in prison for "counterrevolutionary activities" and eventually died in jail), to withdraw from the race. Although Boitel nevertheless went on to receive 48 percent of the votes cast, his defeat placed a pliable Rolando Cubela in charge of the FEU, thus providing the regime with a useful instrument with which to pressure "from below." Under Cubela, the FEU now led the battle within the university against university autonomy, demanding the abolition of the independent University Council and the absorption of its duties by the Ministry of Education. With the *fidelistas* firmly ensconced in the FEU's administrative structures, the organization became a mere appendage of the state. By the time of the next election for FEU president in 1962, there was only one candidate. By the late 1960s, the FEU had lost its identity as a separate organization, and in December 1967 it fused with the Union of Communist Youth (UJC).<sup>19</sup> The outgoing FEU president said it best on this occasion: "There has never been and there never will be the slightest difference between the FEU and the UJC on the subject of objectives, the correct line or the best methods."<sup>20</sup>

The consolidation of the regime's control over the FEU prefigured the more general defeat of the anti-Castro opposition in the early 1960s. Among the components of this opposition were the university students who refused to accept the emasculation of the FEU. These students operated in a political environment characterized by its growing repression. Beatings and mob violence were increasingly evident.

Generally speaking, one might describe the student body at the University of Havana (for here was the focus of the struggle) as composed of

two principal factions.<sup>21</sup> One group joined the supporters of the Revolution and in particular of Fidel Castro. It included many supporters of the 26th of July Movement, members of the PSP Youth, and others from peasant or working class backgrounds whose entry into the University had resulted from or coincided with the Revolution. With the exception of the Communists, these students did not initially have a very coherent or specific ideology; they were attracted by Castro's charisma, his nationalism, and his intense anti-Americanism, as well as by the thrill of making a revolution. These students formed the core of FEU support, and they acted as guardians of the Revolution during the early 1960s, setting up tribunals to judge and expel students whom they deemed engaged in counterrevolutionary activities.

The second group of university students, variously animated by nationalist sentiments and/or by Social Christian thought, had supported the Revolution because of what it promised in terms of national regeneration and return to constitutional rule. Disappointed by Castro's shift toward collaboration with the Communists and by his resort to demagogic plebiscitary measures,<sup>22</sup> these students had begun to form anti-Castro organizations by late 1959. The most important of these groups published a newspaper known as *Trinchera* and drew many of its members from the *Agrupación Católica Universitaria*. Led by Juan Manuel Salvat, these activists sought to borrow a page from the past, organizing a *Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil* (DRE). The DRE entered into active anti-Castro conspiracy in mid-1960, claiming responsibility for several bombs which exploded during a speech by Fidel Castro at the University of Havana in November, participating in a later plot to assassinate him, and then waging a guerrilla campaign. The failure of the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion sealed the fate of the anti-Castro opposition within Cuba, and within a year the DRE and other opposition groups had been effectively destroyed. With their passing, Castro's domination over the university was complete, and his regime could embark without opposition on its task of creating the new "socialist man."

**Intellectual Life** The final dimension of the Castro regime's effort to subjugate the university and intellectual life to the state occurred in the arena of culture. There, the process, while paralleling that which took place with respect to university structures and the student movement, nevertheless had its own dynamic, dictated as much by the regime's desire for international respectability as by its claim (asserted against both the Soviet Union and China) to be the vanguard of the international revolutionary movement. Much as occurred in the Soviet Union in the 1920s,



there was a genuine cultural explosion in Cuba during the early 1960s, with writers and intellectuals of the caliber of Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Pablo Armando Fernández, and Heberto Padilla receiving public recognition and acclaim.<sup>23</sup> These writers were unstinting in their support of the Revolution. Writing in the weekly supplement *Lunes de Revolución*, whose circulation reached 250,000, these men acted as cultural ambassadors for the Revolution, and they helped the regime gain the impassioned support of such renowned European intellectuals as Jean-Paul Sartre. Interested in modern art and avant-garde culture, they kept the flame of intellectual debate alive by publishing the writings of Boris Pasternak, James Joyce, Albert Camus and others, while also presenting diverse leftist viewpoints to the Cuban public. Echoes of the arguments making the rounds among European leftists found their way onto the pages of *Revolución*. So did Leon Trotsky's views on art and revolution. Although Castro and Ernesto "Ché" Guevara praised *Lunes* (both men, each for his own reasons, disdained the Moscow-line orthodoxy defended by the Communist PSP in the early 1960s), the views expressed there fell afoul of PSP stalwarts' efforts to impose the straight-jacket of "proletarian culture" on Cuban society. Matters came to a head in June 1961 when editor Carlos Franqui and the others were summoned to the National Library for an inquiry into their support for a documentary about "bohemian" life in the Cuban capital. In its wake, *Lunes de Revolución* had to suspend publication (the government claimed there was a lack of newsprint), and the film entitled *P.M.* was forbidden to be shown.<sup>24</sup>

The other major outcome from the meeting between Castro and these writers was the statement delivered by the head of state at its close; it laid out the guidelines for intellectual life in Cuba. This speech, as Carlos Ripoll has noted, "(was) an ambiguous statement of contradictory concepts. On the one hand it accepted and defended censorship while, on the other, it mocked 'the despotic rule of the Stalinist revolution' and suggested great breadth of expression consistent with revolutionary goals."<sup>25</sup> Its contradictions are apparent in the speech's most famous passage: "... (W)ithin the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing. Against the Revolution, nothing, because the Revolution also has its rights and the first right of the Revolution is to exist, and against the right of the Revolution to be and exist, nobody.... I believe that this is quite clear. What are the rights of the revolutionary and non-revolutionary writers and artists? Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, no right."<sup>26</sup>

Thereafter, the relationship between intellectuals and the regime

slowly, if unevenly, deteriorated. For several years yet, the novel, narrative in form and therefore considered heretical by the advocates of socialist realism, flourished. So did other art forms as well as the film industry. Remarkably, even in late 1963, Cuban film-makers could issue a statement declaring, "(T)he formal categories of art have no class content."<sup>27</sup> That such margins of freedom could be maintained reflected the regime's continuing concern with its international image as well as Castro's own desire to promote Cuba as the model for his version of Communist heresy. His efforts in this latter regard became especially intense in the period 1963-67. During this phase, he sharply criticized the Soviet Union and China for their failure to support revolution on a global scale, polemicized with Latin American Communist parties for their failure to adopt the armed struggle, lent active Cuban support to guerrilla movements throughout the Continent, and emphasized his regime's commitment to succeed where others had failed, namely in creating the new "socialist man." This man, declared the Resolution of the Cultural Congress held in January 1967, "(would be) capable of thinking for himself...without the prejudices inherited from previous ideologies that in some way continue to operate in some areas of Socialist construction."<sup>28</sup>

But behind the language of tolerance lay a starker reality. As the Castro regime consolidated itself, there was the slow but inexorable imposition of censorship even among pro-Revolution writers. The latter became embroiled in frequent controversies with the regime over cultural policy as well as with respect to other issues such as the increasingly hostile measures the regime adopted toward homosexuals. Among the latter was the drive in 1965 to "rehabilitate" homosexuals and other social deviants through their conscription into the Military Units to Aid Production (UMAP).<sup>29</sup> There was nearly continuous friction with the authorities and brushes with the censor. Regime figures talked darkly about "deviations in cultural activities," and even Ernesto "Ché" Guevara, a man who was almost accorded sainthood by some intellectuals in the West, gravely intoned in his *Socialism and Cuban Man*: "The frailty of many of our intellectuals and artists is the result of their original sin — they are not genuine revolutionaries.... We must make sure that the present conflict-torn generation does not pervert itself, and with it the generations to come."<sup>30</sup> Despite these forebodings, a definitive clash between intellectuals and the regime did not occur for some time. Indeed, even in 1967 the abstract painters of the Parisian *Salon de Mai* had been invited to tour Cuba. The situation changed in 1968. That year the regime undertook both its so-called Revolutionary Offensive and Castro, abdi-



cating his claim to an independent revolutionary line, openly expressed his support of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

These initiatives coincided with a general crackdown within Cuba and the imposition of the Stalinist order in the cultural arena. The drive against "deviations in cultural activities" began with the denunciation of two Cuban writers, poet Heberto Padilla and playwright Antón Arrufat, both of whom had been awarded literary prizes in October 1968 by a panel sponsored by the *Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba* (UNEAC) which included foreign intellectuals. Probably because of this latter circumstance, the Ministry of Education allowed their works to be published, albeit with a critical preface. But the die was cast. Over the next two years, cultural repression intensified and in early 1971, just before the Congress on Education and Culture, to which numerous European and Latin American intellectual luminaries had been invited, the authorities imprisoned Raúl Alonso Olive. His sole crime was to provide the French economist René Dumont with information which the latter published in his book *Cuba: est-il socialiste?*<sup>31</sup> A short time later Heberto Padilla was arrested and compelled to make a public retraction in which he admitted his "errors against the Revolution," denounced his wife and several other writers, and accused Dumont and K.S. Karol of being CIA agents.<sup>32</sup>

The events surrounding the Congress on Education and Culture infuriated many of the Revolution's erstwhile supporters among the European intelligentsia. Already in response to Padilla's jailing, many European and Latin American intellectuals (the list of signatories read like a "who's who" — it included Jean-Paul Sartre, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, Octavio Paz, and Mario Vargas Llosa) had sent Castro a letter denouncing "the use of repressive methods against intellectuals and writers who exercise the right of criticism."<sup>33</sup> Following the Congress, at whose conclusion Castro had berated the "European pseudo-leftists" and the "shameless Latin Americans" who had forever forfeited their chance to be members of a *Casa de las Américas* literary jury,<sup>34</sup> sixty European and Latin American intellectuals assailed Padilla's treatment, labelling it reminiscent of "the most sordid moments of Stalinism."<sup>35</sup>

The Congress marked a watershed for intellectuals and those concerned with intellectual inquiry in Cuba. That education and intellectuals were mere servants of the state, beholden to it, could not have been more clearly stated than in Castro's concluding speech to the Congress: "For us, a revolutionary people in a revolutionary process, cultural and artistic creations have a value in relation to their usefulness for the people, in relation to what they contribute to man....Our valuation is political.

There can be no aesthetic value without human content."<sup>36</sup>

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZED REGIME

The Cuban Revolution entered a new phase in the mid-1970s characterized by the regime's drive to develop the reach and coherence of its institutions and by Cuba's growing alignment with and dependence on the Soviet Union. With the increased emphasis on rationalization and on the formal legitimation of the system came a number of important initiatives, among them celebration of the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (1975), enactment of the first Five-Year Plan (1975), and promulgation of the new Constitution (1976).

Higher education received special attention in this new period. The Constitution made the furtherance of Marxism-Leninism the purpose of education, and through its Article 38 made the latter a function of the state. Practically speaking, of course, the language simply ratified the nature of the relationship between university and state as it had developed in the first decade of Castro's rule; it merely recorded an existing state of affairs. Under the scheme unveiled in the Constitution, higher education was to help form the Communist character of the population. Through free tuition would come the "universalization" of education and the creation of enough scientific and technical cadres to satisfy the developmental needs of the nation.<sup>37</sup>

If the Constitution accorded formal legitimation to the university-state relationship, the 1975 First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party provided the more practical guidelines for the development of higher education. The system of improvements proposed there (known as *perfeccionamiento*) included broad administrative and curricular reforms designed to enhance the quality of teaching and research, the ideological orientation of studies, and the link between education and national economic needs. With the establishment of a Five-Year Plan (to replace the annual but heretofore largely futile exercises), the latter would now be approached in a less haphazard way.

### *Perfeccionamiento*

What did *perfeccionamiento* mean to the Cuban university? The process meant administrative reform and centralization. One measure was the establishment in 1976 of the Ministry of Higher Education, separate from the older Ministry of Education which now focused on primary and secondary levels. The new Ministry took charge of all research and teaching in the universities and affiliated institutions. These included the



universities of Havana, Las Villas, Camaguëy (named after Ignacio Agramonte), and Oriente; the university centers of Pinar del Río, Matanzas, and Holguín; two agricultural science institutes in Havana and Bayamo, the Engineering Sciences Institute in the capital, and the Institute of Mining and Metallurgy near the nickel-complex in Moa.<sup>38</sup>

As part of the *perfeccionamiento* effort, the Ministry also established a set of post-secondary institutions, known as *Centros de Educación Superior*, whose task it was to prepare technical specialists. Among the institutions of higher education were (1) universities whose task it was to develop academic specialists and promote research in medicine, the pure and social sciences, and engineering; (2) higher polytechnic institutes which trained people for administrative and technical positions; (3) the worker-peasant faculties, established at the university level, which allowed adults to attend classes while holding full-time jobs; and (4) university centers which were branches of the parent universities and provided a more narrow and specialized education to meet some local industrial or agricultural needs. In an effort to improve the general level of production, these centers also included classes for local farmers and workers. Upon completion of their training in these centers, graduates usually assumed technical jobs in the province or locality where they had studied.<sup>39</sup>

The *perfeccionamiento* campaign also led to another set of measures which focused on improving the ideological quality of students' education. To this end, the authorities revised textbook and teaching manuals, and ordered all university professors to take courses in philosophy, political economy, and the history of the international working class and Communist movement. The curriculum was also changed, and all students were required to take four courses (about 10 percent of their load) in political economy and scientific communism as well as in historical and dialectical materialism.<sup>40</sup>

A second aspect of this effort to improve ideological quality (which, incidentally, also had the salutary effect for the regime of reducing the labor shortage in the countryside<sup>41</sup>) was the requirement that all students become involved in voluntary labor. Such labor had become a tradition after the 1961 Literacy Campaign, and it reached a fever pitch during the 1970 sugar harvest. Thereafter, in line with its drive for greater rationality, the regime moved to make the practice of voluntary labor less disruptive to established production patterns. Alongside efforts at greater coordination, the Social Service Law (1970) was also enacted. This law guaranteed every student free university tuition but obliged students to "pay" for their education by working where the state deter-

mined they could best serve national needs for three years after graduation.

With *perfeccionamiento*, volunteer productive labor became an institutionalized part of university education itself, with students required to participate in work-study programs either in industry or agriculture, but usually with some relation to the studies or training they pursued. These programs have involved compulsory service in the militia and a minimum of twenty hours productive work per week, and they have left students with virtually no free time.<sup>42</sup> The work-study program aims to provide technically qualified students with the opportunity to use their skills in boosting industrial or agricultural production or in providing teaching or medical resources in the countryside. Such an experience, it is also hoped, would further socialize students in the Revolution's ways, helping in turn to raise the cultural and technical sophistication of the workers and peasants with whom they come into contact.

Alongside the time students are supposed to devote to the work-study program, they are also required to perform several additional hours of voluntary work in the countryside every month. Student work brigades have also been included among the *internacionalistas* sent abroad by the Castro regime. Thus, teachers have been provided to Angola, doctors to Nicaragua, and even lumberjacks to the Soviet Union. Generally speaking, however, the voluntary labor has usually involved physical labor such as planting crops, harvesting coffee, or other "socially productive" tasks in Cuba itself. For example, in the early 1980s some students at the University of Havana had to work an additional eight hours per month (usually on weekends) at the *granjita*, a farm near the José Martí International Airport.<sup>43</sup>

Voluntary labor also takes the form of political activity for both students and professors. This activity takes place on a regular basis as members of the university community (like all other Cubans) are expected to attend Communist party rallies, assemble for Castro's speeches, or greet visiting dignitaries at the airport. As part of his university curriculum, each student must also dedicate a set amount of time every week (one day)<sup>44</sup> during the year to military training. These courses are required for graduation in some fields (especially in the sciences), at which time the student is given the rank of lieutenant in the reserves. Before leaving the university, students must also spend 45 days within a military unit.<sup>45</sup> Such training encompasses physical education, the use of weapons, and military drills. Refusal to take part in such training has carried with it a prison sentence. Since 1981, students have also been required to participate in the so-called *milicias territoriales*



which developed in the wake of the Mariel exodus. Presumably, the regime created these in an effort to mobilize the entire population against an "expected" US invasion. Their less heroic role has been to provide the regime with yet another instrument to penetrate into the lives of citizens.<sup>46</sup>

### The "New" University and Student Organizations

By the late 1970s, the Cuban university bore little resemblance to its pre-Revolutionary counterpart. Having laid the foundations for state control of university administration through the 1962 University Reform, the Castro regime further refined and extended these during the *perfeccionamiento* process. University autonomy was utterly non-existent, and academic freedom a meaningless concept. The state appointed the university rector, and he in turn controlled appointments and dismissals of all teachers, students, and personnel in the university.

Only two student organizations existed (the Union of Young Communists and, again after 1970, the Federation of University Students), but neither had an independent life. The UJC was the Communist party's most direct instrument for intervention among the student body. Selective in its membership, the Communist Youth organization was (and is) responsible for student militias; it also coordinates voluntary labor and enforces the regime's political line among the students. The UJC could employ different methods for dealing with dissident or uncooperative students. It may recommend that their scholarships be revoked, their suspension or expulsion from the university, or circulate false stories about such students which may compel them to drop out of school.<sup>47</sup> Any of these measures would cause the student to carry a "black mark" on his or her record, and it would ruin his or her future chances for higher education or gainful employment. Most frequently, those expelled from the university find themselves unemployed or working at undesirable jobs avoided by others.

Between 1980 and 1982, when the regime was reeling under the impact of the Mariel exodus, the UJC organized the so-called *asambleas de repudio* (they were, in short, government-orchestrated mob attacks) as a mechanism of intimidation.<sup>48</sup> Here, students were browbeaten and harangued before being formally expelled from the university. These *asambleas* have been described by one former student at the University of Havana as: "(T)he dehumanized expression of a political instrument utilized and approved by the highest leaders in Cuba in order to instill fear among and to humiliate 'dissidents' and to demonstrate their 'omnipotence' before the masses. The masses, of course, having been

forced to participate (in the *asambleas*)."<sup>49</sup>

Another former University of Havana student offers the following personal testimony:

The disciplinary court is a caricature of a trial, to have the student talk and defend himself. Supposedly, it is confidential....[T]he student finds himself before various judges, all loyal subjects of Fidel. After being reproached for everything from a hairdo to being seen in Heberto Padilla's home, one is offered three alternatives: either one is with the Revolution 100 percent, or one goes to jail, or one leaves the country. And do not think that leaving the country means simply heading towards the airport. It took me ten years. It has taken others much longer....[Later, one day] during break...professors and representatives of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Communist Youth Union entered our classroom....They asked us to stay, closed all the doors, and requested that the representative of the University Student Federation (FEU) speak. He said dramatically that there was a traitor in the room, named Roberto Valero, who wanted to turn his back on the Revolution....The leader of the group, a mystical Communist, jumped up and said that if I did not leave the room, she would have to leave because 'she could not breathe the same air I breathed'....

Even so, the *asamblea de repudio* was decent. Some friends told me later that my *asamblea* 'was rosy, because it was the first'.<sup>50</sup>

Acting as a complement to the UJC in these activities has been the FEU. It is the heir of the earlier FEU in name only, for the Castro regime has effectively castrated the organization. Revitalized in the early 1970s, the FEU is today a mass organization, membership in which is compulsory for all university students. In contrast to the UJC, which has responsibility for enforcing the regime's political line, the FEU focuses more on mass-based cultural and sporting events and helps the UJC coordinate the innumerable volunteer and political activities which make up day-to-day life in the university.

### University Enrollments in the 1970s

Cuban university enrollments increased annually after the 1962-63 academic year, doubling in number over the next seven years. An especially significant jump in the number of students occurred between the academic years 1971-72 and 1972-73 when, as Table 1 indicates, nearly double the number of first-year students entered the university.

Thereafter, the total number of university students continued to climb, reaching 185,536 during 1981-82 and 235,224 during 1985-86.<sup>51</sup> The latter number represented more than 2.3 percent of the total population.<sup>52</sup> Other sources present these figures in relation to narrower segments of the population. The World Bank, for example, pointed to 19 percent of those aged 20 to 24 as being enrolled in institutions of higher education in 1982.<sup>53</sup> Speaking at the Third PCC Congress in February 1986, Fidel



TABLE 1  
Main Indicators of the Development of Higher Education  
(for the school years from 1959/60 through 1981/82)\*\*

	1959/60	1960/61	1961/62	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65
Higher education centers	6	6	3	3	3	3
Students	25 295	19 454	17 888	17 257	20 393	26 271
1st. year students	—	—	—	—	—	—
Professors	1 046	1 845	992	1 482	1 987	2 600
Graduates	1 331	2 430	1 693	1 372	1 363	86
	1965/66	1966/67	1967/68	1968/69	1969/70	1970/71
Higher education centers	3	3	3	3	4	4
Students	26 162	28 243	29 238	32 327	34 520	35 137
1st. year students	—	—	6 917	7 433	6 225	9 408
Professors	3 032	4 220	4 499	4 641	4 545	4 415
Graduates	1 830	2 834	2 758	2 769	3 832	3 624
	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77
Higher education centers	4	4	4	4	4	27
Students	36 877	48 735	55 435	68 051	83 957	110 148*
1st. year students	9 161	16 398	17 459	21 466	26 985	29 897
Professors	4 484	4 697	5 022	5 847	6 326	8 539+
Graduates	4 253	4 472	4 443	6 106	5 894	9 256
	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	
Higher education centers	27	28	30	32	32	
Students	128 524*	139 991*	188 898~	176 735~	185 536~	
1st. year students	34 020	34 366	81 517^	61 886^	65 217^	
Professors	10 235+	13 785+	14 836+	14 760+	17 420+	
Graduates	11 461	15 343	20 615	25 848	21 009	

\* Includes the preparatory faculties attached to universities and students abroad.

~ Includes "Directed Teaching" ("Free Teaching"), the preparatory faculties, and students abroad.

^ Includes "Directed Teaching" ("Free Teaching") and the preparatory faculties.

+ Includes students and technocrats who assist the faculty.

\*\* At the beginning of the school year. (Does not include data on the centers for higher military education and the Communist party higher education school, "Nico López".)

[Source: Nikolai Kolesnikov, *Cuba: educación popular y preparación de los cuadros nacionales 1959-1982* (Moscow: Editorial Progreso, 1983), p. 369.]

Castro claimed that, in 1985-86, 35 out of every 1000 inhabitants over 17 years of age were studying at the university level.<sup>54</sup> Since the early 1960s, there has also been a nearly constant year-to-year increase (of course, the percentage change has varied) in the number of graduates from Cuban universities. Figures for the 1984-85 academic year indicate more than 26,000 students completed their studies.<sup>55</sup>

Paralleling the rise in university enrollments has been an increase in the number of professors: from 1482 university professors in 1962-63, their number climbed to 4697 a decade later and to 19,552 in 1984-85.<sup>56</sup>

In terms of speculation,<sup>57</sup> Table 2 shows that the single largest group of students in 1975-76 (23,545 individuals or 28.2 percent) majored in education. There followed 19,783 (or 23.6 percent) who pursued careers in "technological sciences" (as distinct from natural or exact sciences), and 9237 (or 11.0 percent) who studied agricultural sciences. Students in the humanities or economics totalled 19,491 (or 23.3 percent), while those in medicine numbered 6835 (or 8.1 percent of the total).

TABLE 2  
University Enrollment by Specializations (1975/76-1980/81)

	1975/76	%	1980/81	%
Technology	19 783	23.6	25 920	17.0
Natural & Exact Sciences	5 065	5.9	6 064	4.0
Medicine	6 835	8.1	15 559	10.2
Agricultural Sciences	9 237	11.0	14 538	9.6
Economics	9 286	11.1	15 340	10.1
Humanities	10 205	12.2	8 274	5.5
Pedagogy	23 545	28.2	60 942	40.2
Physical Education & Sports	—	—	4 511	3.0
Art	—	—	585	0.4
TOTAL	83 957	100.0	151 733	100.0

[Source: Nikolai Kolesnikov, *Cuba: educación popular y preparación de los cuadros nacionales 1959-1982*, op. cit., p. 369.]

A comparison of these figures with those for an earlier period (1966-70), which are presented in Table 3, as well as for a later period (1980-81), indicates some significant changes. Whereas in 1967-68 only 10.0 percent of the students had been enrolled in the humanities, social sciences, and law, a decade later this proportion had increased to 23.3 percent. The change reflected the regime's abandonment of its earlier commitment to



"spontaneous" socialism and moral incentives as well as its new-found respect for planning mechanisms and the "ordinary" laws of economics. Students of the "dismal science" declined sharply from 15.6 percent of university entrants in 1961-65 to 4.2 percent in 1971-75,<sup>58</sup> but apparently increased to an 11.1 share in 1975-76.

Between 1975-76 and 1980-81, there were other changes in the categories of student enrollment. Partly as a result of the Mariel exodus but also because the government came to emphasize the need for and the possibilities of jobs in more technical fields,<sup>59</sup> the proportion of students enrolled in the humanities dropped (from a 12.2 percent share to 5.5), and so did enrollments in several other disciplines. The only exceptions to this trend occurred among those studying medicine (the proportion went from 8.1 to 10.2 percent), and most especially among those pursuing a teaching career. Those studying pedagogy numbered 23,545 (or 28.2 percent of the total) in 1975-76 but increased to 60,942 (40.2 percent) in 1980-81 — a change which reflected the increased emphasis the regime had begun to place on improving the technical and ideological quality of its teaching cadres in the context of the *perfeccionamiento* campaign.

TABLE 3  
Distribution of University Entrants, 1960-75,  
According to Faculty

	Number (and percent) of Students		
	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75
Technology	745 ( 9.6%)	2 628 (18.7%)	3 792 (17.9%)
Pure Sciences	461 ( 6.0%)	862 ( 6.1%)	2 298 (10.8%)
Medical Sciences	2 101 (27.2%)	3 488 (24.9%)	6 165 (29.0%)
Agricultural Sciences	383 ( 5.0%)	1 015 ( 7.2%)	2 452 (11.6%)
Economics	1 206 (15.6%)	1 259 ( 9.0%)	859 ( 4.2%)
Humanities	1 209 (15.6%)	834 ( 6.0%)	1 410 ( 6.6%)
Pedagogy	1 622 (21.0%)	3 973 (28.1%)	4 231 (19.9%)
TOTAL	7 727 (100%)	14 023 (100%)	21 243 (100%)

[Source: Theodore MacDonald, *Making a New People, Education in Revolutionary Cuba* (Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books, Ltd., 1985), p. 169.]

These figures are suggestive both of the successes and the problems confronting the regime with respect to university education. On the one hand, the government can justly point to significant increases in the

number, distribution, and proportion of students enrolled in Cuban universities (and the number of faculty who teach them) as proof of the advances Cuba has made since the 1959 Revolution. Partially buttressing the regime's case are the World Bank data for 1982, which show Cuba comparing favorably with a number of Latin American countries (such as Chile and Brazil which respectively had 10 and 12 percent of their 20-24 year olds enrolled in the university), and even with Great Britain and Switzerland, both of which had a percentage equivalent to Cuba. A less favorable comparison emerges if we use other Latin American countries as points of reference. Again using the just-cited *World Bank Report*, Cuba's university enrollment as a proportion of the 20-24 year old population was smaller than that of Panama, Venezuela, or Ecuador which, respectively, had 23, 22, and 35 percent of this age group attending the university.

But statistics are, in any case, only numbers. They can only be understood in relation to the specific political and social contexts which generate them. What have been the Cuban government's objectives in expanding university enrollments? At one level, of course, the response is straightforward and not so different from that of many other governments. If Cuba is to develop economically, it needs a cadre of well-trained technicians and professionals.<sup>60</sup> An improved educational system would presumably increase productivity and enhance efficiency.

On more than a few occasions, too, Castro has made explicit the regime's commitment to provide all Cuban citizens with a university education. This is a theme which had broad appeal in a country where, despite all the social and economic changes since 1959, the average citizen still remains in awe of those with university degrees. Expanding the possibilities for university enrollment must also be understood as a distinct benefit or privilege which the regime is extending to those who identify with and actively support the Revolution. This benefit assumes an even greater significance in the context of the day-to-day economic hardships confronting ordinary citizens. Given Cuba's labor surplus, increasing university enrollments has also provided a way for the regime to handle what might otherwise become a potentially explosive unemployment situation among youth.

Increased university enrollments must also be examined in terms of the degree to which Cuban society can absorb the students thus trained or the graduates produced. On this score, there is evidence that the *masificación* of the university has not been entirely salutary. During his speech to the FEU Congress in January 1987, Castro alluded to some of these problems.<sup>61</sup> First, with respect to the sheer size of enrollments, Castro



declared: "Let us eschew the mystique of numbers and consider it a success in the future when they begin to tell us that the number of regular graduates is going down because that is what is in keeping with the concept of quality."<sup>62</sup> The FEU Congress also revealed the disinterest of many students (especially in agronomy and pedagogy) for their chosen professions. In his speech, for example, Castro cited a poll which showed 54 percent of those studying agronomy "had no interest in the profession. They simply chose it because they could not study any other thing because of their grade point average."<sup>63</sup> Similarly, for those studying pedagogy, Castro said, there were many "who joined because they did not make the grade for anything else."<sup>64</sup> Striving to put the best face on this situation, Castro then argued that the large number of graduates would now allow both for the creation of a "reserve of professionals" and for a more rigorous university admissions policy.

Alongside his more general call for more stringent admission requirements, Castro announced a 12 percent reduction in the number of those (according to him, in 1985-86 they had totaled 8000) who could enter the university directly, without having performed any military service. The purpose here was two fold: on the one hand, to provide a bonus for those who have served in the armed forces (especially the ones who have gone to Africa); on the other, to infuse the university with students "who will get another chance to study...(w)hen they are more mature, more studious."<sup>65</sup> With improved selectivity, too, should come a reduced drop-out rate. Among medical students, Castro has mentioned, the proportion of drop-outs was nearly 50 percent in the early 1980s.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, although the percentage of those completing their university studies has increased significantly (between the academic years 1977-78 and 1981-82, the percentage rose from 23.2 to 48.5 percent),<sup>67</sup> the latter figure suggests a significant part of the student population still "votes with its feet" against the regime's admission policies.

### University Admissions and Student Life

These figures afford us a bird's-eye view of the student body in the Cuban university. But there is more to the life of a university than the distribution of its students' enrollment. How does a Cuban student gain access to the university? What are the standards used to evaluate him or her prior to entry and then while he or she is enrolled in the university? What is university life like in contemporary Cuba? Let us turn to these questions.

Admission requirements include submission of pre-university transcripts, an entrance exam, a test to evaluate the applicant's "revolution-

ary" attitude, a personal interview, and a report from a mass organization — such as a neighborhood Committee for the Defense of the Revolution — to which the prospective student belongs. Chances for admission (especially to the study of law, economics, philosophy, political science, psychology, and the diplomatic corps) are especially affected by a student's demonstrated participation in communist youth organizations. For these disciplines, such criteria are much more important than the student's past academic record. More objective criteria are employed for those who wish to enter the natural or exact sciences.

During this procedure, the prospective student expresses his preference for a specific field of study; and the university authorities, following guidelines and quotas set by the Ministry of Higher Education in coordination with other ministries, decide on who will be admitted. The system distributes the highest-rated students to those fields which are most in demand; the lowest-rated (academically and politically) students are placed into unpopular fields such as, for example, agronomy. Not only is this blatant use of political criteria unfair; it is wasteful. Many students who are assigned to fields for which they have little interest ultimately drop out of school as a means of protesting a career which is chosen for them.<sup>68</sup> Some students, of course, are never permitted to pursue a university education. Typically, this includes those who have applied for exit visas. At various points during the admissions process, the applicant is also asked (orally or in written form) to express his views about the Revolution, military service, and/or organized religion. Being a religious believer does not automatically preclude admission, except in the more "political" fields noted above. Those who have been judged ineligible for normal university work are, in the best of cases, compelled to follow adult evening classes. Restrictions have also existed against homosexuals and other so-called deviants who are considered morally deficient.<sup>69</sup> As has regularly occurred in the Soviet Union with many "refuseniks," those who are already enrolled at a Cuban university and seek to emigrate are expelled and repayment of educational costs is demanded. In one case, for example, the authorities required 20,000 *pesos* from a former university student; this, when physicians, who are quite well remunerated by the system, receive about 250 *pesos* per month.<sup>70</sup>

Once accepted into the university, the student faces a strictly regimented and highly politicized life. University tuition is free, and there is a government system of scholarships which may be used to pay for lodging and board (if necessary), clothes, books, and other materials, as well as to provide a monthly stipend. During the 1970s, such scholarships were provided to approximately half of those pursuing university studies,<sup>71</sup>



and it is likely this proportion has remained generally unchanged.<sup>72</sup> These scholarships have been used to increase the number of workers and peasants who enroll in the university; they are granted on much the same basis as students are granted admission into the university.

Only those students who have shown special devotion to the cause of the Revolution and the Party are given scholarships. The life of a student awarded financial aid by the government is strenuous. Those students living on campus may only leave on Sundays. The rest of the week, he or she is expected to attend all classes, pass every course, participate in the militia, and engage in voluntary labor. More traditionally, scholarships are also used to promote the study of certain fields and to dissuade study in others. Thus, for example, during the early years of the Revolution, the government tripled the number of scholarships available to those who wished to study chemistry, while reducing those to the Faculty of Law by 92 percent and otherwise eliminating grants for studies in philosophy.<sup>73</sup> A limited number of scholarships are also available to students so they may study abroad. According to the 1985 *Anuario Estadístico*, the number of these students has increased in the last decade. During 1978-79, they numbered 4116; in 1984-85 and 1985-86, there were 7703 and 7462 such students, respectively.<sup>74</sup> Table 4 also indicates that the bulk of such students (well over 90 percent) pursue technical studies in the Soviet Union.

Much like admission and scholarship requirements, the university grading system has also placed great emphasis on the student's revolutionary fervor. This is especially true in the humanities and social sciences, where students are expected to demonstrate a solid grasp of the official state ideology. Those students who have trouble applying Marxism-Leninism to their course work receive correspondingly lower grades. The Stalinist example to create a Marxist-Leninist science of genetics notwithstanding, politics plays a much less important role in the more technical fields of university study. There, grading is quite objective, reflecting the student's actual mastery of the specific subject.

"Students," Fidel Castro has said, "should see the beauty in their career, fall in love with it, should see that these are revolutionary duties, their Moncada, their Granma." Once admitted to the university, students receive further exposure to a "communist" education through a broad variety of courses, militia work, and productive labor. Here, it should be noted, the strong emphasis Cuban education places on "volunteer" work is not accidental. It fits into the state's more general efforts to intrude into all aspects of private life and to intimidate and crush potential or real sources of dissent. All students are also required to take the four courses

TABLE 4  
Cuban Students in Higher Education Programs Abroad

Country	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82
TOTAL	4 718	6 003	6 385	6 969
USSR	4 116	5 318	5 635	6 258
Czechoslovakia	40	58	84	105
GDR	149	152	159	158
Hungary	46	76	97	111
Poland	55	66	60	45
Bulgaria	218	235	254	226
Rumania	94	98	96	66
Country	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86
TOTAL	7 836	7 577	7 703	7 462
USSR	7 140	6 904	7 106	6 913
Czechoslovakia	104	122	115	138
GDR	195	196	187	191
Hungary	118	129	103	86
Poland	10	5	2	10
Bulgaria	229	187	165	110
Rumania	40	34	25	14

[Source: *Anuario Estadístico de Cuba* (República de Cuba/Comité Estatal de Estadísticas, 1985), Table XIII-18, p. 494.]

in Marxist-Leninist philosophy mentioned above (two semesters of dialectical and historical materialism, and two semesters of political economy), and every program of specialization incorporates aspects of Marxist-Leninist ideology into its curriculum.

Throughout his or her university experience, the student is aware of State Security's ubiquitous presence. There is an ample network of informants whose task is to ferret out opponents or dissidents. Even an apolitical student is not safe, for to be unengaged with the Revolution is to be suspect. For those who do not identify with the regime, the experience of studying in such a controlled and repressive environment is exhausting.

#### Censorship and Intellectual Control

The correlative of curricular regimentation has been the strict control of all reading materials. It is next to impossible for any Cuban university (or other) student to obtain reading and study materials which dissent



from the official ideology. Foreign newspapers, journals, and books which in any way challenge the reigning orthodoxy have been banned from public circulation. The list is a long one, ranging from magazines such as *Paris Match* and *National Geographic* through books by Daniel Bell and Erich Fromm, and including works by Ernesto Cardenal (*Sartre visita a Cuba*) and Pablo Neruda (*Confieso que he vivido*).<sup>75</sup> Similar treatment has been accorded books about Cuba by eminent European or North American scholars. Such banned books as exist have either been smuggled in or are part of a private collection dating from before the Revolution, and they are circulated in plain brown wrappers among students or dissidents.<sup>76</sup> There is an extensive list of materials to which access has been limited in university libraries. These have a so-called *fondo de reserva* into which only those who have been authorized by their supervisors and by the appropriate Communist party organization can delve. Even then, these books must be returned very quickly. The José Martí National Library has an entire floor of publications which are on "reserve" for the privileged few. Regular university students are not given access to this literature without special authorization, and the restrictions have been even more strictly enforced since late 1984 when the regime began to heighten its ideological vigilance. For certain foreign visitors, on the other hand, the rules are more likely to be flexible, especially if there is a political gain to be made. Similar restrictions are in force at various ministry libraries (Foreign Affairs and Foreign Commerce, among them) as well as in those belonging to research institutes like the *Centro de Investigaciones de la Economía Mundial*.

The life of the student in the Cuban university is no more regimented or less subject to government interference than that of the professor. Marxism-Leninism guides the curriculum and sets the research priorities in the Cuban university. Faculty tenure, it was noted earlier in this essay, was abolished early on by the Revolution — a situation which places university professors with their year-to-year contracts entirely at the mercy of the state. Disciplines differ, however, in the degree to which researchers are likely to be subjected to ideological litmus tests. In some disciplines, researchers are able to approach their subjects from a more technical perspective; in others, the "political" absolutely dominates.

Examples of the former are the natural and pure sciences. In line with the emphasis the *perfeccionamiento* campaign placed on raising the level of technical education, the science departments have received greater attention and resources from the state since the mid-1970s. Despite the greater emphasis on scientific research over the last decade, however, the Cuban government devotes a very small proportion of its Gross National

Product (GNP) to such research, and of this amount perhaps only 2 or 3 percent is given to basic research.<sup>77</sup>

The omnipresent state role in scientific research (all research must be approved by and coordinated with the appropriate state bodies, and its content and results are the property of the state) has been justified in terms of rationalization, but in practice the *perfeccionamiento* of state control has done little to encourage the advancement of science in Cuba and to lessen Cuba's dependence on imported technology from the Soviet Union or its bloc allies. Natural or physical scientists are, of course, relatively freer than their social science counterparts, but it is all a matter of degree. Because "hard" scientists are less likely to examine issues or provoke debates which could challenge the legitimacy of Marxism-Leninism and of the regime, Cuban government officials have made fewer explicit ideological demands on them. And there have certainly been few recent cases of political interference as overt as the 1969 episode, when Fidel Castro publicly lambasted two British researchers for criticizing his pet ideas on animal husbandry.<sup>78</sup> But even so, the rules are clear, and control by the state evident. There may not be a Marxist-Leninist science of biology as Lysenko and Stalin hoped to establish, but if such has failed to emerge it is not because those guardians of the new religion have not tried. In any case, a budding Sakharov does well to beware crossing the line and becoming involved in political issues.

If ideological intrusion in the physical or natural sciences is oft-times less evident, the same may not be said about the social sciences or history. Research in these disciplines must be conducted from a Marxist-Leninist and, since the early 1970s, pro-Soviet perspective. According to Decree Law No. 43 (March 1980), those teachers and students who "defam(e) or publicly disparag(e) the institutions of the Republic and the political, social and mass organizations of the country, as well as its heroes and martyrs" may be expelled from educational institutions.<sup>79</sup> Predictably, then, there is no room for variety or, as the regime might put it, for "ideological diversionism" in the university. Neither explanations nor formal hearings take place. Enrique Hernández Méndez, for one, was summarily dismissed from his teaching position at the University of Havana in 1980 and then sent to jail.

The Cuban system places two choices before academics and intellectuals. They can submit to state control, in return for which they become eligible for "official" support and privileges. Or they can refuse, in which case the penalties may be jail or the permanent limbo of "marginality." Under these circumstances, it should come as no surprise that such academics or intellectuals as might have heterodox ideas would impose a



rigid self-censorship on their work. For them, an unpublished manuscript which has been disapproved for publication is too dangerous even to circulate. There are, in any case, no outlets independent of state control. All Cuban publishing houses are in the hands of the state, and the Ministries of Culture and Education share supervision for editing, printing, and distributing all books and journals. Censors carefully review all manuscripts for "ideological correctness," and if any escape from this filter, entire press-runs are destroyed.<sup>80</sup>

### The Absence of Academic Freedom

Academic freedom and the right to free intellectual inquiry are nonexistent in Castro's Cuba. The Castro regime, like its totalitarian counterparts elsewhere in the world, has nonetheless made a significant contribution to the world of culture and ideas, if unintentionally. Numerous Cuban literary figures and intellectuals have suffered exile, imprisonment, or torture at the hands of the regime. From this experience they have produced important works of literature and poetry. At first, it had been easy for the regime to single out "counterrevolutionary" intellectuals. As was discussed above, however, by the late 1960s, censorship had been extended even to writers who had been or were sympathetic to the Revolution.

Heberto Padilla's imprisonment in 1969 and the harassment of others marked a watershed in the institutionalization of cultural repression by the Castro regime. Padilla was, of course, fortunate; he was released after a short time in prison due to international pressure and eventually left the country. Others were less so. Pedro Luis Boitel died in jail, having received inadequate medical care after a hunger strike. Still others like Armando Valladares (who was a minor officer in the Postal Service when he was arrested in 1960) spent twenty-two years in prison, and this experience served as basis for *Against All Hope* (1985), a book as riveting and depressing as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1974). His release in 1982 came only after the personal intervention of French president François Mitterrand.

What happened to Padilla, Valladares, and countless others who dared to think differently from what the regime commands cannot be dismissed as merely episodic. Quite the contrary. The regime has been systematic and all too effective in its efforts to extirpate "ideological diversionism." The purge began soon after Castro took power, and its threat remains very much alive. Emblazoned on the gates of the University of Havana is the slogan "The university is only for revolutionaries."

Academic repression is, for the most part, discreet in Cuba. It has been

codified and rendered ordinary by the innumerable strictures and regulations which have been enacted. After three decades in power, the regime may be said to have "normalized" the university, but it has never been entirely successful in squashing dissent. One manifestation of this has been the "passive" dissent of many university students who have learned to go through the motions of revolutionary enthusiasm. The regime has also been shaken by the 1980 Mariel exodus when over 125,000 Cubans, many of them from the generation formed under the Revolution and with university educations, left the country on rafts and boats. Castro himself took note of this phenomenon, and the "rectification" campaign launched in late 1984 is really an effort to recapture the soul of a lost generation.

The student generation of the 1980s faces an uncertain economic future. Cuba's economic situation, never particularly bright, has worsened. A recent decline in the world price of sugar and petroleum has contributed to these problems, but they also have deeper roots in the inefficiency of the system. Indeed, economic planning has shone by its absence in the nearly three decades of Castro's rule, a situation about which Castro complained in February 1986, even as he refused to accept any personal responsibility for the "the absence of comprehensive national planning for economic development."<sup>81</sup> Corruption and *socio-lismo* (the Cuban equivalent for patronage arrangements — this time under socialism) have become endemic. Castro's foreign policy adventures, most especially in the presence of at least 40,000 *internacionalistas* in Angola, have also produced additional strains on Cuban society.

Since 1986, Castro has unleashed a vociferous campaign among all sectors of Cuban society to combat symptoms of declining revolutionary fervor. He has lashed out at the free peasant markets (these were "corrupting," "neo-capitalistic," and run by "lumpen, anti-social elements"<sup>82</sup>) and called on Cubans to exhibit "the courage, patriotism and revolutionary spirit of the combatants" at the Bay of Pigs. Breathing nostalgia for the 1960s, he stated that "the moral sense [*conciencia*] of the workers is more important than meeting a certain (production) goal."<sup>83</sup> What effect these appeals have had and will have on the average Cuban citizen (inside or outside the university) is difficult to evaluate at this point, but it does suggest that, when confronted by the straight-jacket of a bureaucratic state-socialist system which consistently employs the threat of repression, Cubans have developed their own "passive" response to official demands.

As the experience of several decades shows, overt opposition to the regime is hazardous. But in the university, as in society, some have



chosen this course, fully expecting to pay the price.<sup>84</sup> One such individual is Ariel Hidalgo Guillén, published author, supporter of the Revolution, professor of socioeconomics at the Manolito Aguiar Workers' College, and himself a student of history at the University of Havana.<sup>85</sup> In 1979, Hidalgo Guillén opposed an *asamblea de repudio* that had been organized against another student. Hidalgo Guillén was promptly dismissed from his teaching position and barred from the university. Two years later, while working at a construction job, he was arrested and charged with possession of "enemy propaganda." Ironically, the charges against Hidalgo Guillén referred not to subversive propaganda which he had distributed, but rather to an unpublished manuscript entitled *Cuba, the Marxist State and the New Class* which he had written. The essay dealt with the contradictions of Cuban socialism and focused on the emergence of a "new class" which exploited the working class. For having written this book, Hidalgo was sentenced to eight years in prison, of which 14 months were spent in solitary confinement. As of this writing, Hidalgo is still in jail, having been charged under Article 108.1 of the Cuban Penal Code which states that anyone "who prepares, distributes or possesses" propaganda which "incites against social order, internal solidarity or to socialist state" is subject to "a sanction of one to eight years loss of liberty."

Ricardo Bofill Pagés is another former university professor who has suffered imprisonment.<sup>86</sup> At the time of his first arrest in 1967, he was a member of the Communist party and a professor of Marxist philosophy at the University of Havana. Accused of "ideological diversionism" and of sympathizing with a pro-Soviet PSP "micro-faction," Bofill drew a twelve-year prison sentence, of which he served five years. Upon his release, the government denied him permission to return to the university, and he was instead assigned to a janitorial position at various government buildings. Arrested again in 1981 for attempting to emigrate from Cuba illegally and sentenced to a five-year term, Bofill this time served two years in the *Combinado del Este* prison. Once released, he was denied the right to work. During this period, Bofill organized the Cuban Committee for Human Rights, becoming its president. In April 1983, fearing further imprisonment for having told his story to two French journalists, Bofill took refuge in the French embassy. Promised an exit visa by Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Bofill left the embassy. Five months later, after another meeting with French reporters, he was rearrested, interned in a psychiatric hospital, and then sentenced to another twelve-year prison term. He had served only two years of this sentence when international pressure won him his release in 1985. The

government had in the meantime pressed forward with its efforts to destroy the nascent Committee for Human Rights (imprisoning several of Bofill's collaborators),<sup>87</sup> and he once again took refuge in the French embassy in August 1986, where he remained until late January 1987.<sup>88</sup> As of this writing, he remains free from custody and engaged in extending the work of his committee.<sup>89</sup>

## AMERICAN SCHOLARS' RESEARCH IN CUBA

Since the Revolution, Cuba has fascinated foreign scholars, both for the changes Castro has wrought in its society and for the role this small nation has come to play in international politics. Alongside this fascination, there has been frustration with the paucity of information pertaining to developments in Cuba. The reasons for this are evident. Since 1961, when the Kennedy Administration first imposed a boycott of the island, travel there has been severely restricted. For most of this time, too, the Castro regime has also not been particularly interested in encouraging detailed studies of Cuban society, except in those areas (public health and education) where the Revolution appears to have made significant advances. Often enough, however, scholars have been reduced to relying on estimates or statistics which Castro cites in his speeches, a situation which helps to explain why there are significant lacunae in studies of the Cuban Revolution.<sup>90</sup> Despite these obstacles, interest in research in Cuba has intensified. Through university-sponsored programs, the number of students and professors who have traveled to Cuba has grown. Most recently, several exchange programs between American and Cuban universities have been established.

Research in and about Cuba since the Revolution has always been dominated by politics. During the 1960s, as the Castro regime pursued its claim to international revolutionary vanguard status, it encouraged left-leaning intellectuals to visit and do research in Cuba. At first their books were panegyric, but then in the late 1960s, in a development which also contributed to the estrangement of many Cuban intellectuals, even sympathizers of the Revolution began to question the regime's accomplishments. For example, writing *Cuba est-il socialiste?* made René Dumont *persona non grata* with the regime. But even so, Castro's honeymoon with foreign intellectuals did not end immediately. Many remained mesmerized by his claims to revolutionary leadership.

Castro's relationship with Oscar Lewis during the 1960s reveals the tension his regime has felt between using what intellectuals might write about Cuba to enhance the regime's image and the deep-seated fear of



free intellectual inquiry. Known for his famous "culture of poverty" studies in Mexico and Puerto Rico, Lewis had been invited by Castro in 1969 to conduct a sociological study in Cuba. Lewis accepted and, supported by a three-year grant from the Ford Foundation, went to Cuba to conduct research on how family and community life had changed there since 1959. Since most of the research involved individual autobiographical interviews, Lewis laid down several conditions before beginning his study: (1) he would decide what and whom to study without intervention or censorship by the government, and (2) the government would have to provide assurances that it would not harm or punish any of the subjects who cooperated with the study.<sup>91</sup> Himself interested in having the Revolution's successes chronicled and in proving that Cuba, unlike other socialist countries, had a climate of free inquiry,<sup>92</sup> Castro orally agreed to the conditions. The Lewises (Oscar's wife Ruth was his collaborator) began their project under the "ubiquitous presence of the state" and with a Cuban "militant" assigned to chaperone the project. They understood the study might be halted at any time the Cuban leadership decided that changes in internal conditions warranted it.

The study had been halfway completed in June 1970 when the Castro regime terminated "Project Cuba" on grounds that the Lewises had breached the original agreement. The termination came at a time of severe strain for the regime, when the country's economy was in very poor shape (1970 was the year of the monumental and nearly disastrous ten-million-ton sugar cane harvest) and Castro had come under fire from left-wing intellectuals both for his domestic policies and his alignment with the Soviet Union. Eager to prevent any further negative publicity and convinced that the project's in-depth interviews would uncover disillusionment and opposition to the regime, the authorities closed down the project.<sup>93</sup> For "Project Cuba," its arbitrary suspension included the confiscation of those personal papers, manuscripts, interviews, tapes, and photographs which the police could find. For one of the Lewises' informants, an interviewee who expressed criticism of the regime, cancellation of the project meant imprisonment. For Oscar Lewis, who had been sympathetic to the Revolution, the demise of "Project Cuba" and the false and accusatory nature of the reasons the regime gave for its termination represented betrayal; he died of a heart attack six months after returning to the United States from Cuba.<sup>94</sup>

The termination of the Lewises' "Project Cuba" coincided with the stiffening of cultural orthodoxy in Cuba. Beset by internal difficulties and having shifted toward close alignment with the Soviet Union, the Castro regime intensified its crackdown on dissident intellectuals. In this

climate of overt cultural repression and with Castro relatively uninterested in improving his international image, academic exchanges between Cuban and United States scholars diminished.

A new spurt of academic exchange activity occurred during the mid-1970s when first President Gerald Ford and, more especially, President Jimmy Carter looked for ways to normalize relations with Cuba. Paradoxically, the overtures came at a time of intensified Soviet-Cuban military collaboration in the Third World (particularly in Africa) and when Castro had become the Soviet Union's point-man in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The Castro regime thus viewed American diplomatic overtures as confirmation of American imperial decline in the wake of Watergate and the Vietnam War. Even as the regime maintained and intensified its "internationalist" commitments in the mid-1970s, however, it also sought expanded ties with institutions and groups (among them, the Cuban exile community) in the United States.

One aspect of this effort was the expansion of academic exchanges. Greater numbers of American scholars were allowed to enter Cuba, and representatives of the Ford Foundation (previously very suspect in the eyes of the Cuban government, among other things for its support of "Project Camelot" during the 1960s), the Social Science Research Council, and the National Endowment for the Humanities were permitted to visit the island. From this period dates the exchange agreement signed between the Smithsonian Institution and the Cuban National Academy of Sciences which exchanges specialists in a number of fields — among them, archaeology, anthropology, and biology.<sup>95</sup>

By the late 1970s, the climate for exchanges (academic or other) between Cuba and the United States had worsened. Within Cuba, continued economic failures and the expectations built up by the exchange of family visits with the exile community contributed to the Mariel exodus — an event which, as argued above, underscored the frustration of those young people who had been formed under the Revolution's tutelage. The July 1979 Sandinista victory in Nicaragua and the subsequent intensification of the guerrilla war in El Salvador also affected the development of relations as well as scholarly exchanges between the United States and Cuba. Both the Castro regime and its Nicaraguan counterpart believed the overthrow of Somoza augured a new wave of revolutions throughout Central America. Their joint support of the Salvadorean guerrillas antagonized the Carter Administration, thus ending any hopes for normalization of relations with Cuba. The election of Ronald Reagan to the United States presidency in



November 1980 dimmed such prospects and further reduced academic exchanges.

Like relations between Cuba and the United States, academic exchanges between the two countries have been problematic during the 1980s. Restrictions and controls have existed on both sides. American travel to Cuba has been effectively barred under such US legislation as the Trading with the Enemy Act, and from the United States side only scholars conducting academic research, accredited journalists, official visitors, and visits to relatives have been exempted from the ban on travel to the island.

Levels of tension between the United States and Cuban governments fluctuated after Ronald Reagan's inauguration in 1981, reaching a high-point in October 1983 after the U.S. intervention in Grenada. Tensions escalated again in 1985 with the Administration's decision to begin airing programs specifically about Cuban society and politics on the United States Information Agency's Radio Martí Program. Retaliating against the United States for breaking his regime's information monopoly, Castro suspended an immigration agreement negotiated with the Reagan Administration during the previous year. In response, President Reagan issued a Presidential Proclamation dated October 4, 1985, which prohibited the issuance of visas to any official or employee of the Cuban government or member of the Communist party unless that person was travelling to the United States to conduct business at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington or at the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York. Also excluded by the order were "(those) individuals who...are considered...by the Secretary of State or his designee to be officers or employees of the government of Cuba or the Communist party of Cuba."<sup>96</sup> Since all universities as well as all other institutions of higher education in Cuba are controlled by the state, the proclamation in effect has prohibited Cuban academics from visiting the United States.

Another legal obstacle to exchanges with Cuban academics has been the Department of the Treasury's regulations on foreign currency control. These prohibit American foundations and universities from paying travel-related expenses in a third country for Cubans who do not hold an entry visa into the United States. Since entry visas have been regularly denied by the State Department, this has prevented US institutions from disbursing money so as to pay for Cubans to travel abroad to seminars or conferences.<sup>97</sup>

Cuba has imposed its own set of restrictions on academic exchanges. Negotiations over visa applications can last for many months, and many a "Cubanologist" has been refused permission to visit Cuba. The Cuban

Ministry of Education and the National Institute of the Tourist Industry insist that visitors supply them with adequate credentials, a list of references, and a specific schedule of research activities, complete with a detailed list of anticipated visits to facilities and requests for field interviews. All specific research plans must receive prior approval from the National Academy of Sciences or the relevant Cuban government ministry. In some cases, of course, such strict requirements may be waived as with technical specialists whose knowledge may be used to teach Cubans about a particular field. Similarly, in those cases where an American scholar is judged to be apolitical or sympathetic to the Revolution, or where the contact may advance the ends of Cuban foreign policy, researchers are easily granted access to the island and research facilities.

Keenly interested in breaking its isolation and in legitimizing itself internationally, the Cuban government has spared no effort in trying to develop its contacts with the United States. One dimension of this effort has focused on what Paul Hollander has perceptively called "political tourism."<sup>98</sup> It involves sojourns by politicians, ministers, political activists, and young enthusiasts. Institutions such as the Center for Cuban Studies in New York and numerous universities (among them, American, Brown, George Washington, Florida, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale) have also developed informal exchange programs which have generally consisted of sending students to Cuba.<sup>99</sup>

Nearly every person who is granted entry into Cuba, be he or she an interested scholar, a curious journalist, a student, or a casual political tourist, is given a directed tour by the government. A sample itinerary includes a government press-type briefing complete with a packet of propaganda materials, interviews with government leaders (their levels vary, of course), visits to model schools, factories, experimental farms, and development projects, and a trip to some historical museum or battlefield which commemorates Castro's revolutionary struggle. This guided tour offers visitors an elaborate, modern version of the "Potemkin village."

Another dimension of the Cuban government's drive for international respectability has involved its effort to establish exchange agreements with United States universities similar to those it has organized with the *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas* (CIDE) in Mexico, the *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLASCO) in Buenos Aires, and the *Universidad Simón Bolívar* in Caracas. Despite the restrictions discussed above, several institutional exchange programs (funded by the Ford Foundation) have been established in recent years with the United States.



Two Cuban entities — the *Centro de Estudios sobre América* (CEA) and the *Departamento de Investigaciones sobre los Estados Unidos* (DISEU) — have played pre-eminent roles in developing and extending academic exchanges with the United States. Both are research centers with close links to the International Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, and they sponsor seminars and regularly provide the Cuban government with analyses about developments in United States domestic policy and foreign policy. Evidence of a bureaucratic rivalry between these organizations notwithstanding,<sup>100</sup> CEA and DISEU have coordinated their efforts when dealing with American institutions.

One exchange program between Cuba and the United States has involved collaboration between the Latin American Studies Association (now based at the University of Pittsburgh) and the CEA. It has been funded by the Ford Foundation. Prior to 1985, many American scholars travelled to Cuba on invitation from the CEA to attend meetings with faculty and students. CEA scholars were also invited to LASA-sponsored meetings and conferences. Numerous CEA analysts attended the LASA meeting in Mexico City in 1983. For the next national LASA meeting in April 1985 in Albuquerque, most of the Cuban delegation was denied entry visas. No Cubans attended the October 1986 LASA meeting in Boston, and LASA approved a resolution calling for “lift(ing) restrictions on (the) entry of Cuban academics, scientists and artists.”<sup>101</sup> In an effort to sustain the exchange program, LASA and CEA organized a seminar in Havana in May 1986 on Latin American migration to the United States<sup>102</sup> and scheduled a similar meeting on the debt crisis for January 1987. Another seminar on contemporary inter-American relations was held in July 1987 in Havana.<sup>103</sup>

A second exchange agreement has involved the University of Pittsburgh, whose Center for Latin American Studies negotiated a protocol with the University of Havana’s Department of Research on the United States (DISEU) in 1985-86. To be funded by the Ford Foundation, the envisioned program is very broad in scope, involving exchanges in both the natural and social sciences. As University of Pittsburgh President Wesley W. Posvar described it, the agreement was “the most extensive between the University of Havana and any American university since the Cuban Revolution.”<sup>104</sup>

Posvar and LASA president and University of Pittsburgh professor Cole Blasier signed a preliminary version of the agreement during a visit to Havana in May 1985. Following revisions, the final (but still unpublished) text was signed in mid-1986 during a visit to Pittsburgh by

Fernando Rojas, Rector of the University of Havana. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, a distinguished Cuban-born economist and, at the time, Director of the Center for Latin American Studies, led the Pittsburgh side during the second phase of negotiations. Mesa-Lago had not been able to join his Pittsburgh colleagues during their May 1985 trip because he did not receive a visa from the Cuban authorities. His absence from the delegation provoked a storm of controversy, and many feared Mesa-Lago had been “blackballed.” Whatever the exact reason why Mesa-Lago did not receive a visa, he played an important role in fleshing out the May 1985 preliminary agreement. The result is, he believes, “the best accord one could ask for on paper.”<sup>105</sup> In his view, it enshrines the principle of “strict reciprocity,” specifying the number of people and the amount of time researchers could spend in each country (Americans could have up to six months in Cuba) over the next five years and also guaranteeing specific opportunities for “social science” research in Cuba.

Scheduled to begin during the 1986-87 academic year, the agreement has not yet been implemented due to the United States government’s denial of visas to those Cuban citizens considered to be “officers or employees” of the Cuban government or Communist party. But this is only one obstacle. On the other side, questions remain both as to the access and freedom American exchange scholars will have in Cuba and to those efforts the Cuban government may make to exclude certain researchers. With respect to this latter point, there are only verbal “understandings” between the two sides, so very much would depend on the demands for compliance made by the University of Pittsburgh.

The University of Havana’s DISEU and the Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies have signed another exchange program. Begun in 1980 (again with the support of the Ford Foundation), this program has focused on the social sciences with exchanges of students and scholars. With the incorporation of Wayne Smith (former head of the US Interests Section in Havana during the Carter Administration) to the SAIS faculty, the exchange program turned its focus explicitly to foreign policy issues. Due to the Reagan Administration’s visas policy, several workshops organized by this program were held in Havana, Toronto, and, most recently, Mexico City.<sup>106</sup>

American opponents of the Reagan Administration’s Cuba policy and officials of the Cuban government have sharply criticized the curtailment of exchanges between academics of the two countries. Arguing that the Reagan Administration’s policy of visa denials only impedes academic freedom and hurts the U.S. side as much as Cuba,<sup>107</sup> various U.S. scholars have publicly urged President Reagan and the Congress to lift



the restrictions on the entry of Cuban academics into the United States. These arguments will be addressed in the pages to follow where we offer some conclusions about the contemporary Cuban university system.

## CONCLUSION

Few countries and their leaders have sparked more polemics or been the subject of greater debates than Cuba or Fidel Castro. Indeed, if Castro has accomplished anything since he assumed power in January 1959, it has been to project Cuba and his person (he has deliberately sought to intertwine the two) into the international spotlight. Like the Spanish Civil War or the Vietnam War, the Cuban Revolution has attracted an extraordinary amount of attention. Like the Soviet Union in the 1920s, China in the 1950s, and Vietnam in the 1960s, Cuba has also generated innumerable myths — myths about “popular” power, the creation of a “new” man, and extraordinary accomplishments in the fields of social welfare. Nowhere have these “myths” been more assiduously fostered or more vigorously presented than in the field of education.

This essay has analyzed the condition of the contemporary Cuban university. As a first step toward understanding higher education in Cuban society, we examined its history, focusing on the university's role in the Cuban struggle for independence and in the formation of Cuban national consciousness. Beginning in the late 19th century, the Cuban university became a hothouse of nationalist sentiment. Conscious of their singular responsibility and opportunity, students and professors in the Cuban university strove to contribute to national economic and social well-being. The most visionary members of the university community saw no contradiction between this effort and the pursuit of intellectual inquiry. Rather they assumed that the struggle for university autonomy and curricular reform, for greater social and economic justice, for democratic government, and for the extension of national sovereignty were all aspects of the same battle. These were the battle cries which the university movement and, more generally, Cuban reformers employed in their struggles against the Machado and Batista dictatorships. Alongside these positive visions and accomplishments, some less salutary developments were noted. Perhaps the most important of these were the cult of violence, the climate of intimidation, and the disdain for public authority which developed both in the university and in the country more generally. These tendencies emerged first during the anti-Machado struggle and then deepened in the 1940s and 1950s with the institutionalization of private greed at public expense.

Fidel Castro grew to political maturity in this environment, and he shared extravagantly in its visions as well as in its weaknesses. An ardent nationalist, Castro also exhibited in extreme form the penchant for *caudillismo* and a willingness to believe that he and only he understood and represented Cuban nationalism. From this extreme personalist perspective grew Castro's need to rule as a dictator. He found in Marxism-Leninism the justification for his own supreme role, and in his virulent anti-Americanism the legitimation of his alignment with and eventual dependence on the Soviet Union.

The anti-Batista victory in January 1959 did not become the patrimony of all Cubans. Slowly but decisively, Castro consolidated his authority and, instead of reinstituting the democratic provisions of the Constitution of 1940 for which he claimed to have been fighting, he established a dictatorship more efficient and ferocious than any Cuba had known in its short history. The tragedy extended to all domains of civil society. Like other sectors, the university and the educational system as a whole were soon brought under the complete and stifling control of the state. As Article 38 of the 1976 Cuban Constitution solemnly intones: “The state orients, foments and promotes education, culture, and the sciences in all their manifestations.” That stark reality has often been hidden behind the screen of oft-cited figures about educational advancements. We have reviewed some of these claims in the course of this brief monograph. Yes, there have been advances in the extension of educational opportunities for Cubans, especially for those who live in the countryside and among the members of the working class. Enrollments have increased and so, apparently, have expenditures for primary, secondary, and university education. But has the price not been too high? Why could Cuban society not have developed, its wealth increased and so too the opportunities for its citizens without the imposition of a dictatorship? For decades we have read about the educational (and other) accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution, but it now appears that some of this was overdone. Was it not Castro himself, quoting Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, who declared: “We have advanced so far, we now know we are in very bad shape.”<sup>108</sup>

After decades of self-congratulatory propaganda, it is now heard that, in 1985-86 alone, nearly 10,000 teachers left their jobs.<sup>109</sup> That the “scientific level” of the *personal docente* (teaching personnel) is “insufficient.”<sup>110</sup> That a large proportion of secondary school students fail to advance to the next highest grade each year “because the exams have been,” in Castro's words, “above the students' possibilities.”<sup>111</sup> That the number of students enrolled in the universities (according to estimates by Minister of Higher Education Fernando Vecino Alegret more than



285,000 students would enroll in universities for the academic year 1987-88)<sup>112</sup> may be cited as one of the Revolution's accomplishments, but that the *masificación* of the university not only helps to mask un- and under-employment in Cuban society but has also contributed to this phenomenon. That these numbers do not hide the cultural desert in contemporary Cuba, the absence of literary criticism and the weakness of research in the social sciences, or the repression which is visited upon those intellectuals or ordinary citizens who dissent from the reigning orthodoxy. That the alienation of youth, which is spurred both by growing unemployment and dissatisfaction with restrictive cultural policies, is an unquestionable reality. A spontaneous protest developed in the fall of 1987 outside Havana's *Cine Chaplin* when the authorities decided not to show a Soviet film entitled "Is It Easy to Be Young?" which is reflective of Mikhail Gorbachev's "spirit of *glasnost*."<sup>113</sup> Similarly, there are some reports that, at about the same time as the previous incident occurred, during an assembly at the University of Havana's School of Journalism a student pointedly asked Castro about the government's lag in promoting *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness). Quoting 1920s reformer Julio Antonio Mella, the students also invoked the long-abandoned principle of *autonomía universitaria*.<sup>114</sup>

This broader context provides the background from which to approach academic and university exchanges between Cuban and United States centers of higher learning. As we have seen, discussions over these exchanges have been inextricably tied to political debates, and partisans on both sides have seen in these exchanges merely political instruments. At one level, of course, they are right. Politics leaves untouched no aspect of human society. But the discussion of academic exchanges and scientific research goes beyond politics; it concerns the extension of human knowledge and the exchange of opinions. We may feel very strongly about an event or a circumstance, but we must always consider the possibility that our view may not be the correct one. Under these circumstances, exchanges between societies assume a special importance because they are a way of testing, of confirming whether our insights and approaches will be sustained in the face of challenge or competition. Scientific inquiry boils down to this, and exchanges between scholars and intellectuals should entail precisely this.

From this perspective, exchanges are important for at least three reasons: first, they expose our values and perspectives to debate; second, they contribute to reawakening or extending the tradition of intellectual inquiry; and third, they contribute to greater international understand-

ing and the lessening of tensions between different political and social systems.

At the present time, Cuba is ruled by an autocratic political system, one which most Americans find objectionable. But just as the political problem cannot be wished away, so it is vital that those responsible for establishing and administering exchanges with Cuban universities understand the reality with which they are dealing. Unlike their counterparts in the United States, Cuban universities are not autonomous centers of learning. They have been thoroughly purged and politicized. They are part of a state apparatus, and they obey the directives of the central administration. Similarly, academic departments and centers of research (especially those in the social sciences) have no autonomy; they have a close and interlocking relationship with the state and the ruling Communist party. The CEA and DISEU, organizations with which many of the social science exchange programs have been conducted, are closely attached to the International Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. They serve the interests of the Castro regime's foreign policy. In addition, distasteful as it may be to consider, academic exchange programs can be used as platforms from which to carry out intelligence operations or espionage recruitment.

Exchanges between Cuban and United States universities should be approached with this background in mind. Several principles should guide them:

(1) **PARITY:** American researchers going to Cuba should be given the same access and liberties as Cuban researchers coming to the United States. Similarly, non-Cuban scholars should have the same access to academic journals and publications as their Cuban counterparts do in the United States, especially when the results of their research is reviewed or criticized. The recent attacks on several "Cubanologists" in the Cuban media suggests that particular care should be taken in this respect.<sup>115</sup>

(2) **NON-DISCRIMINATION:** Researchers should have open possibilities to travel. Universities, centers of research, and departments should insist on equal right of entry for students and researchers. Exclusively professional (assuredly, not political) criteria should be employed in determining who may be on an exchange delegation. The decision as to which Americans may participate in these delegations must be in the hands of the sponsoring United States entity. This requirement is of some consequence given the visa problems that many distinguished "Cubanologists" have



encountered in their efforts to secure access to the island for research purposes.

(3) **BALANCE:** Accommodation to the research interests of both sides must be made. Cuban and United States scholars have different research interests, but neither side should be given a preference in the topics around which conferences are organized or in the subjects which students and scholars may wish to study. If balanced, exchanges will be mutually rewarding.

(4) **PLURALISM:** The attainment of respect and mutual understanding is only possible if plural points of view are expressed openly and debated in the varying fora where exchanges materialize. False unanimity should be avoided since it hinders rather than promotes clarification of positions and views as well as more genuine understanding.

Academic exchanges between Cuba and the United States do not exist and cannot be developed in a political or moral vacuum. Representatives of universities in the United States who negotiate exchanges with their Cuban counterparts cannot ignore the nature of the Cuban educational system and of the university there. Academic freedom and the right to intellectual inquiry are not recognized and do not exist in the contemporary Cuban university. There is no way around this cruel reality. But those of us who are lucky enough to live and work in a different environment should not thereby become complacent and self-satisfied. Academic integrity and intellectual freedom are by definition fragile, and it is an awareness of this fragility which links all who value the right to freedom of inquiry. The bond links Cuban and American academics, researchers, and intellectuals, all of whom realize that in today's world the exercise of such freedoms is an accident of location. This circumstance imparts a special responsibility on those who would wish to develop academic exchanges. In pursuing them, North American academicians and university administrators must be diligent, sparing no effort in the struggle to create and develop new parcels of freedom for their counterparts in Cuba.

## *Appendix 1:*

# CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

## CHAPTER IV

### Education and Culture

ARTICLE 38. The state directs, foments and promotes education, culture and science in all their aspects.

Its educational and cultural policy is based on the following principles:

- a) The state bases its educational and cultural policy on the scientific world view, disclosed and developed by Marxism-Leninism;
- b) education is a function of the state. Consequently, educational institutions are state-owned. The fulfillment of the educational function constitutes a task in which all society participates and is based on the conclusions and contributions made by science and on the closest relationship between study and life, work and production;
- c) the state promotes the communist education of the new generations and the training of children, young people and adults for social life. In order to make this principle a reality, general education and specialized scientific, technical or artistic education are combined with work, development research, physical education, sports, participation in political and social activities and military training;
- d) education is provided free of charge. The state maintains a broad scholarship system for students and provides the workers with multiple opportunities to study with a view to the universalization of education. The law regulates the integration and structure of the national system of education and the extent of compulsory education and defines the minimum level of general education that every citizen must acquire;
- e) artistic creativity is free as long as its content is not contrary to the Revolution. Forms of expression in art are free;
- f) in order to raise the level of culture of the people, the state foments and develops artistic education, the vocation for creation and the cultivation and appreciation of art;
- g) creation and investigation in science are free. The state encourages and facilitates investigation and gives priority to that which is aimed at solving the problems related to the interests of the society and the well-being of the people;
- h) the state encourages the workers to engage in scientific work and to contribute to the development of science;
- i) the state directs, foments and develops all forms of physical education and sports as a means of education and of contribution to the integral development of all citizens;
- j) the state sees to the conservation of the nation's cultural heritage and artistic and historic wealth. The state protects national monuments and places known for their natural beauty or their artistic or historic value;
- k) the state promotes the participation of the citizens, through the country's social and mass organizations, in the development of its educational and cultural policy.



ARTICLE 39. The education of children and young people in the spirit of communism is the duty of all society.

The state and society give especial protection to children and young people.

It is the duty of the family, the schools, the state agencies and the social and mass organizations to pay special attention to the integral development of children and young people.

## Appendix 2:

### SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Nombre y Apellido(s):

Dirección:

Teléfono(s):

### INSTRUCCIONES

Lea todas las preguntas cuidadosamente antes de responder. Conteste las preguntas lo más detalladamente posible. Use letra de imprenta o máquina de escribir. Si necesita más espacio, por favor agregue hojas adicionales.

1. ¿Fue usted profesor(a) y/o estudiante universitario(a) en Cuba? En caso afirmativo, ¿(en qué fecha y en qué casa de estudios?  
Profesor(a) universitario(a)  
Fecha: de 19\_\_ a 19\_\_  
Centro de estudios:  
Fecha: de 19\_\_ a 19\_\_  
Centro de estudios  
Estudiante universitario(a)  
Fecha: de 19\_\_ a 19\_\_  
Centro de estudios:  
Fecha: de 19\_\_ a 19\_\_  
Centro de estudios:
2. ¿Hubo incremento o disminución en el número de profesores y/o de estudiantes durante el tiempo que pasó usted en la universidad? En caso afirmativo, explique por qué.
3. ¿Cuál era el proceso de selección de profesores y/o en los criterios de admisión de estudiantes como resultado de la revolución?
4. Una vez admitido(a) en la universidad, ¿puede un(a) estudiante diseñar su propio curriculum? ¿Hay libertad para matricularse en cualquier curso?
5. ¿Puede un(a) estudiante elegir libremente la carrera que desea seguir en la universidad?
6. En las universidades cubanas de hoy, ¿hay sitio para el pluralismo



ideológico? ¿Había sitio para el pluralismo ideológico en la universidad donde usted enseñaba o cursaba estudios?

7. ¿Suelen ofrecer los profesores puntos de vista diversos o alternativos?
8. Durante una lección, ¿puede un(a) estudiante cuestionar el punto de vista del profesor?
9. ¿Qué criterios son utilizados para calificar a un(a) profesor(a) o a un(a) estudiante de “disidente”?
10. ¿Qué sucede cuando un(a) profesor(a) o un(a) estudiante es calificado(a) de “disidente”? ¿Puede permanecer en su centro de estudios? ¿Puede publicar, divulgar o expresar sus puntos de vista? Explique.
11. ¿Son objetivos los sistemas de evaluación académica? ¿Las calificaciones reflejan justa y adecuadamente la calidad del rendimiento académico del estudiante? ¿Pueden entrar en juego otros factores ajenos al rendimiento académico a la hora de asignar una calificación?
12. ¿Qué circunstancias podrían llevar a un(a) intelectual a prisión en Cuba? Dé ejemplos.
13. ¿Existen organizaciones académicas o estudiantiles en las universidades cubanas? ¿Cuál es la naturaleza de dichas organizaciones (por ejemplo, artísticas, científicas, religiosas, profesionales, políticas, etc.)?
14. ¿Cree usted que estas organizaciones están politizadas? En caso afirmativo, ¿por qué y de qué manera?
15. ¿Es obligatorio pertenecer a las organizaciones mencionadas en las preguntas #8 y #9, o hay libertad de abstenerse de participar en ellas? ¿Qué sucede cuando un(a) intelectual *no* forma parte en ellas?
16. ¿Quién o quiénes mandan en estas organizaciones? Explique.
17. ¿Qué papel juega la juventud del Partido Comunista de Cuba en las organizaciones estudiantiles?
18. ¿Qué son las “asambleas de repudio”?
19. ¿Cuándo y por qué surgieron las “asambleas de repudio” en Cuba?
20. ¿Quién o quiénes dirigen las asambleas de repudio? ¿Qué razones pueden dar lugar a que se inicie un proceso de “asamblea de repudio” contra un(a) estudiante o un(a) profesor(a)?
21. ¿Es posible cursar estudios universitarios y prestar servicio militar en Cuba simultáneamente?
22. ¿Hay estudiantes que deben interrumpir o abandonar sus estudios

por prestar el servicio militar?

23. ¿Qué sucede cuando un(a) estudiante se niega a prestar el servicio militar?
24. ¿Gozan los militares o ex-militares de algún status privilegiado como estudiantes? En caso afirmativo, explique por qué.
25. ¿Existen organizaciones religiosas universitarias? ¿Por qué o por qué no?
26. ¿Son respetadas — o al menos toleradas — las creencias religiosas a nivel personal e individual de los estudiantes y/o profesores en las universidades?
27. ¿Hay libre acceso a toda clase de libros, revistas, periódicos, películas, cintas, grabaciones, u otro material audiovisual en las bibliotecas de las universidades cubanas?
28. ¿Hay algún tipo de bibliografía o material audiovisual al cual *no* se tiene libre acceso? Explique.
29. ¿Existían libros prohibidos? En caso afirmativo, dé ejemplos.
30. ¿Qué sucedía si a un(a) profesor(a) o a un(a) estudiante le encontraban un libro prohibido?
31. ¿Hay libertad de investigación en Cuba? (Se puede investigar cualquier tema a cualquier nivel en cualquier área, o existen prioridades establecidas? Explique.
32. ¿Existe alguna prohibición o restricción para investigar algún tema? En caso afirmativo, ¿por qué? Dé ejemplos.
33. ¿Qué tipo de publicaciones estudiantiles o de especialización académica existían en su universidad?
34. ¿Hubo intercambios entre universidades norteamericanas y el centro académico donde usted enseñaba o cursaba estudios *antes* de la revolución? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué clase de intercambios eran (artísticos, científicos, religiosos, políticos, profesionales, etc.)?
35. ¿Hubo intercambios entre universidades norteamericanas y el centro académico donde usted enseñaba o cursaba estudios *después* de la revolución? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué clase de intercambios eran (artísticos, científicos, religiosos, políticos, profesionales, etc.)?
36. ¿Cómo se integran las delegaciones *cubanas* de intercambio entre universidades? ¿Están compuestas principalmente por profesores, estudiantes, personal administrativo de las universidades, etc.? ¿Suelen ser incluidas personas ajenas a las universidades?



37. ¿Cómo se integran las delegaciones *norteamericanas* de intercambio entre universidades? ¿Están compuestas principalmente por profesores, estudiantes, personal administrativo de las universidades, etc.? ¿Suelen ser incluidas personas ajenas a las universidades?
38. ¿Diría usted que hay paridad entre las delegaciones cubanas y norteamericanas en lo referente a:
- Número y conformación de los miembros que integran las delegaciones
  - Duración de las visitas en los respectivos países
  - Propósito de los intercambios
  - Actividades realizadas
  - Acceso a fuentes de investigación (personas, material, bibliográfico y audiovisual, archivos, etc.)?
39. ¿Tenían los profesores o estudiantes que hacer trabajos voluntarios? En caso afirmativo, ¿con qué frecuencia y dónde?
40. ¿Tenían los profesores o estudiantes que asistir a reuniones o concentraciones políticas? En caso afirmativo, ¿con qué frecuencia y dónde?
41. ¿Puede agregar algún otro aspecto o anécdota que no hayamos incluido o al cual no hayamos hecho referencia?
42. Dé los nombres y las direcciones de personas que han sido estudiantes y/o profesores(as) universitarios(as) en Cuba que podrían proporcionarnos información adicional para el presente estudio.
43. Por favor indique si desea que agreguemos su nombre y dirección a nuestra lista de envíos.
- Si\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

## Notes

- Jaime Suchlicki, *University Students and Revolution in Cuba* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1969), p. 15. Much of what follows in this section is drawn from his excellent account. Also of interest to the reader may be Rolland G. Paulston, "Cuba, Republic of." In *International Encyclopedia of Higher Education*, Vol. V, no. 3 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), pp. 1174-84.
- For an overview of the role played by the University of Havana, its graduates and professors, in the development of Cuban culture and science, see the Special Issue of the *La Revista de la Universidad* (February-March 1930), Vol. III, No. 3, in particular the essay by the University's Rector, Clemente Inclán Costa entitled "Influencia de la universidad en el progreso intelectual y político de Cuba," pp. 24-87.
- For a discussion, see the chapters by Orlando Alborno ( "Models of the Latin American University") and by José Luis Romero ("University Reform") in Joseph Maier and Richard W. Weatherhead (eds.), *The Latin American University* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), especially on pp. 125-27 and 136-39.
- For a discussion of Mella's background, see the book by J. Suchlicki, *op.cit.*, pp. 20-23.
- There are competing versions of his assassination. Mella had just broken with the Communist Party of Mexico (where he was living), and some versions see the Comintern's hand in his death. This interpretation is not as farfetched as it might seem, if one remembers the Mexican and Spanish Communists' role in the assassination of Leon Trotsky in 1940. The other version, carefully nurtured by the Cuban Communist Party and part of the "official biography" put forward by the Castro regime, placed responsibility for his death with Gerardo Machado. Both versions are plausible. For a discussion, see Suchlicki, *op.cit.*, p. 22.
- Generation is used here in the sense employed by Cuban historians: to denote the graduating class.
- For a useful review of Castro's activities and how they fit the temper of the time, see editors Nelson P. Valdés and Rolando E. Bonachea's "Introduction" to *The Selected Works of Fidel Castro [Volume 1 — Revolutionary Struggle 1947-1958]*, pp. 5-10, and the section titled "University Years," pp. 129-130 (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1972). Hugh Thomas also touches on the subject in *Cuba, The Pursuit of Freedom* (N.Y.: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), pp. 809-11.
- See the discussion in J. Suchlicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.
- Hugh Thomas argues that the evidence implicating Fidel Castro in the murder is inconclusive, but states that Fidel was probably present at the meeting of the *Unión Insurreccional Revolucionaria* (UIR) where the assassination attempt was planned. Thomas feels that the UIR leader, "given to black humor," might have found it appealing to have one Castro kill another. Hugh Thomas, *The Cuban Revolution, op.cit.*, pp. 24-8.

On the other hand, relying in part on the testimony of exile Enrique Ovares, the ex-president of the *Federación Estudiantil Universitaria* (FEU), Tad Szulc con-



cludes that Fidel was not the assassin. Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (N.Y.: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1986), pp. 166-68.

For his part, Castro denied involvement. In a statement he issued to *Diario de la Marina* (Havana) on February 26, 1948, Castro declared: "Far from encouraging the crime, if we had known beforehand what was going to happen, we would have prevented it." The statement may be found in Rolando Bonachea and Nelson Valdés (eds.), *The Selected Works of Fidel Castro [Volume 1 — Revolutionary Struggle: 1947-1958]* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1972), p. 133.

10. There has been endless speculation about Castro's adherence to Communist doctrine. The subject has been raised once again by the polemics provoked by the publication of Tad Szulc's *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (1986). What Castro thought in the period 1957-61 will probably never be known, but it is my impression that political opportunism, megalomania, and a virulent form of anti-Americanism stand at the core of his political "ideology." Regardless of what he may have become since seizing power (and, there again, I view his commitment to Leninism as simply providing a legitimation for a personalist autocracy), there is little evidence of any well-developed ideology prompting him toward action in the 1940s and early 1950s.

11. On Martí as a figure in Cuban historiography, see Enrico Santi, "José Martí and the Cuban Revolution," *Cuban Studies*, (1986) no. 16, pp. 139-150.

12. J. Suchlicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-4.

13. The radicalization of the Cuban Revolution proceeded apace through 1960-61, and it culminated with Castro's announcement, in the wake of the failed April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, that he was a Marxist-Leninist. Much has been written about Castro's ideological evolution during this period and about the role played by the United States in the process of radicalization. It is not our wish to add to that sizeable debate here. Suffice it to indicate our view: Castro did not go anywhere he did not wish to go in the early 1960s; his visceral anti-Americanism was intimately linked to a fundamentally autocratic political vision whose objective was the consolidation of a system in which his authority could not be challenged from either an organizational or ideological point of view. Marxism-Leninism only provided the justification and the instruments for this effort. Claiming to be the only valid and legitimate interpreter of Cuban national aspirations (the absurdity of the claim is only surpassed by its sheer audacity), Castro moved on a broad front to silence his opponents and critics.

14. Jan Knippers Black, *et.al.*, *Area Handbook for Cuba* (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Studies of the American University, 1976), p. 173.

15. Norman Luxenburg, "A Look at Castro's Statistics," *Encounter*, Vol. LXII, No. 3 (March 1984), pp. 58-62.

16. Norman Luxenburg, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

17. Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, one of the few old Communists from the PSP to have maintained and expanded his political power base since the early 1960s and today a Vice-Prime Minister, played a key role in the maneuvering to establish Castroite control over the university. See his article "La reforma universitaria," *Cuba Socialista*, vol. II, no. 6 (February 1962), pp. 22-44, for his view on the subject.

18. See the discussion in Jorge I. Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cam-

bridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1978), p. 397.

19. J.I. Domínguez, *ibid.*, p. 280.

20. K.S. Karol, *Guerrillas in Power: The Course of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1970), p. 463.

21. The description here follows the analysis provided by Jaime Suchlicki in *University Students and Revolution in Cuba*, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-5.

22. In explaining why he was asking Boitel to withdraw from the race for the FEU presidency, Castro told students such a decision should take place by acclamation, not election. "All students should proclaim one president unanimously. That will really be a victory for all and not the Pyrrhic triumph of one group." Cited in J. Suchlicki, *op. cit.*, p. 90. The logic of this statement should surprise no one who has followed Castro's career even in a glancing way. The ten-hour harangues and the massive plebiscites in the Plaza de la Revolución at which attendance is monitored by block committees — whose responsibility it is to distribute ration coupons and to act as agents of public security — reveal Castro's way of thinking.

23. For a general discussion, see Carlos Ripoll's chapter entitled "Writers and Artists in Today's Cuba" in Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), *Cuban Communism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1987), pp. 456-70.

24. *P.M.* was the film produced by *Lunes de Revolución* which documented the night life in certain Bohemian sectors of Havana, as mentioned in the text. For a more in-depth discussion, see Carlos Ripoll's *Harnessing the Intellectuals: Censoring Writers and Artists in Today's Cuba*. (New York: Freedom House, 1985), p. 24.

25. C. Ripoll, *ibid.*, p. 24.

26. Quoted in C. Ripoll, *ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

27. Quoted in J.I. Domínguez, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

28. Quoted in C. Ripoll, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

29. J.I. Domínguez, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

30. The passage is quoted in K.S. Karol, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

31. See C. Ripoll, *op. cit.*, p. 31, and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the 1970s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), p. 98.

32. See C. Mesa-Lago, *ibid.*, p. 99. For an autobiographical account, see Heberto Padilla, "Prólogo con novela" in his *En mi jardín pastan los héroes* (Barcelona: Editorial Argos Vergara, 1981).

33. Quoted in C. Mesa-Lago, *ibid.*, p. 98-9.

34. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 100.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

36. Quoted in C. Ripoll, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

37. See Appendix I for a reproduction of the *Constitution of the Republic of Cuba*, Chapter IV, Articles 38 and 39.

The government's support for technical education is reflected in the percent of scholarships awarded to university students in the 1970s. Of total enrollment in 1969-70, 55.2 percent of the students were attending class on government scholar-



ships; 51.9 percent received grants in 1970-71; 44.6 percent received grants in 1971-72. The numbers begin to decline as of this date, due in part to the State's emphasis on lower education. The number of scholarships awarded to technical secondary school students is quite high. See J.I. Domínguez, *op. cit.*, p. 169, Table 5.11. See also R.G. Paulston's chapter in *Revolutionary Change in Cuba*, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-7.

38. J.I. Domínguez, *op. cit.*, pp. 404-5.

39. This list of educational institutions does not include those schools connected to the armed forces or the Communist Party. With respect to the former, mention should be made of the Camilo Cienfuegos secondary-level military schools from which students are admitted to one of several *Centros de Estudios Militares* (CEM). According to one source, in the early 1970s the CEM academies produced between 1200 and 1600 officers per year. See Jan Knippers Black *et al.*, *Arga Handbook* (*op. cit.*), p. 473. The PCC has its own university-level institution, the Nico López Higher Party School, directed by Central Committee member and 26th of July Movement veteran Ramiro Valdés. There is another group of students who, having attended pre-university institutes run by the Ministry of the Interior, attend the university while on the Ministry's payroll.

40. J. Suchlicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 117 *et seq.*

41. The latter shortage, it should be noted, resulted from the regime's drive in the early 1960s to seize control of the land and to organize state-run cooperatives.

42. Such regimentation reaches down to all educational levels. During the closing session of the Third PCC Congress, Minister of Education José Ramón Fernández criticized the schedule which 11 and 12 year-olds were compelled to follow in rural secondary schools. By his count, excluding "plenums, meetings, breakfast, mid-morning break, and lunch," students had to spend 62 hours a week in organized activities. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, December 9, 1986, p. Q11.

43. Answer 39 in the questionnaire prepared by Respondent # 1. (See Appendix 2 for sample questionnaire.)

44. Questionnaire prepared by Respondent # 2. Question 21 on page 6.

45. *Ibid.*

46. University students who have left Cuba complain bitterly about the work-study and voluntary labor programs. At one level, they focus their criticisms on the regimentation of university life it implies. Even during vacation they are vulnerable. There is always some visiting dignitary arriving at the airport or some speech by Castro for which the crowds must assemble. More than that, students have complained about the disorganization of these programs, and the lack of relevance they have for the students' training.

47. See J. Suchlicki's comments on the role of the *Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas* (UJC) in determining the allocation of scholarships by loyalty, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

48. These *asambleas de repudio* or *cortes disciplinarias* were in many ways a revival of similar organisms which existed in the 1960s. Roberto Valero, "El Peso de la Ortodoxia", *El Universal* (Caracas, Venezuela), June 1982.

49. Questionnaire filled out by Respondent # 1. Question 18 on page 5.

50. Roberto Valero, *op. cit.*

51. For the latter figure, see the *Anuario Estadístico* (1985), p. 487.

52. The estimated population of Cuba in 1985, according to the *Anuario Estadístico* (1985), p. 57, was 10,152,639.

53. See the World Bank's *World Development Report — 1985* (Washington, D.C.), p. 223.

54. See Fidel Castro's "Main Report" to the Congress as translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, February 7, 1986, p. Q27.

55. *Anuario Estadístico* (1985), p. 489.

56. For the latter figure, see the *Anuario Estadístico* (1985), p. 486.

57. See Nikolai Kolesnikov, *op. cit.*, p. 369 for a table on university enrollments by specializations comparing 1975-76 figures with those of 1980-81. These and other statistics from closed systems should be employed with care.

58. See the table in Theodore MacDonald, *Making a New People: Education in Revolutionary Cuba* (Vancouver, British Columbia: New Star Books, Ltd., 1985), p. 169.

59. T. MacDonald, *ibid.*, pp. 26 and 127.

60. For a description of the qualities sought for in specialists, see N. Kolesnikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-83.

61. See his closing speech to the Third FEU Congress on January 10, 1987, as contained in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, January 21, 1987, pp. Q1-Q25.

62. *Ibid.*, p. Q20.

63. *Ibid.*, p. Q17.

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*, p. Q23. The ratio of males in the university population is expected to remain constant because many veterans continue to take advantage of order 18/84, issued by the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), which allows soldiers and sergeants who have completed their military service "outstandingly" to enter the university. See the article by Roberto Travieso, "Nueva Via, Nueva Perspectiva," *Verde Olivo* (Havana), September 3, 1987.

66. *Op. cit.*, p. Q6.

67. See Fernando Vecino Alegret, *Algunas tendencias en el desarrollo de la educación superior en Cuba* (Havana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1986), p. 95.

68. The drop-out rates in the Cuban education system are high. According to a modest estimate, approximately 350,000 adolescents neither study nor work, either because they dropped out of school after having failed an exam or because they never enrolled. See *Cuba Quarterly Situation Report* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Research and Policy of Radio Martí, September 15, 1987), Vol. III, no. 2, pp. VI-8/9. The data was elaborated from the *Anuario Estadístico* (1985). With refer-



- ence to unemployed youth, see Fidel Castro's speech at the closing session of the 3rd PCC Congress on December 3, 1986. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, December 5, 1986, p. Q3. A broadcast from the official *Radio Rebelde* (April 7, 1987) acknowledged similar problems: "(T)here is a lack of jobs in some parts (of the country), and youth are the most affected." Quoted in the previously cited *Cuba Quarterly Situation Report*, p. VI-8. A heavy loss of teachers (2000 in Havana province in the first six months of 1986) and some of the problems mentioned earlier in the text led to a discussion involving Fidel Castro, Education Minister José Ramón Fernández, and an unidentified woman delegate at the PCC Congress on November 30, 1986. *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, December 9, 1986, p. Q4. Other students resist passively by not attending government-sponsored meetings and activities and "voluntary" work requirements.
69. Inter-American Commission, *The Situation of Human Rights in Cuba*, (Organization of American States), 7th. Ed., p. 174.
70. Conversation with Roberto Valero, September 30, 1987, in Washington, D.C. Valero never paid; he emigrated on a boat with other *marielitos*.
71. See J. Knippers Black *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
72. The information in this section has been obtained by the author in interviews with teachers and students who have emigrated from Cuba. The interviews were strictly anonymous, since many of those interviewed still have relatives in Cuba. Most of the data has been substantiated by newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and books as cited.
73. T. McDonald, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
74. See the *Anuario Estadístico* (1985), *op. cit.*, Table XIII-18, p. 494.
75. Neruda, in particular, did not care much for the guardians of Cuban Communist orthodoxy, and in the aforementioned book referred to one of these, Roberto Fernández Retamar, as "sergeant Retamar." Cf. *Confieso que he vivido* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1974), p. 408. In this book, Neruda also refers to those "political falsehoods, ideological weaknesses, the literary resentments and jealousies" (p. 444) which not only motivated Cuban attacks against him in the 1960s but confirmed his place in the National Library's *Index*.
76. Question #30 on p. 7 in the questionnaire prepared by Respondent # 1.
77. J.I. Domínguez, *op. cit.*, p. 402.
78. J.I. Domínguez, *ibid.*, p. 405.
79. Inter-American Commission, *The Situation of Human Rights in Cuba*, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
80. Panit Istrati's *Mihail* and *Kyra Kyralina*, for example, were destroyed once their homosexual references were discovered.
81. See Castro's Main Report to the Third PCC Congress on February 4, 1986, as translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, February 7, 1986, p. Q16.
82. See Castro's speech at the Cooperatives Meeting delivered on May 18, 1986, and translated in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, May 22,

1986, p. Q1.

83. See Castro's speech of April 20, 1986, as reprinted in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service — Latin America*, April 22, 1986, p. Q22.

84. Anyone who has read Armando Valladares' *Against All Hope* (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) cannot fail to feel repulsion at the way political dissidents have been treated. His chronicle (and the reports from Amnesty International as well as the OAS InterAmerican Commission on Human Rights) stand in eloquent contrast to Castro's disingenuous statement in July 1983 to French and American journalists: "From our point of view, we have no human-rights problem—there have been no 'disappeareds' here, there have been no tortures here, there have been no murders here. In twenty-five years of revolution, in spite of the difficulties and dangers we have passed through, torture has never been committed, a crime has never been committed." Epilogue to *Against All Hope*.

The 1986 Human Rights Report of the Department of State notes that the Cuban government persistently repeats the above statement but does not allow human rights groups to come to Cuba to monitor the situation. The Report goes on to list the human rights abuses which have come to the organization's attention despite the strict controls imposed by the Cuban government. These two facts both disprove the Cuban government's allegations that there are no human rights violations in that country and indicate that, in reality, there are more human rights abuses in Cuba than the outside world knows. "Cuba," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1986* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Committee Print, February 1987).

For other references, see Jorge Valls, *Twenty Years & Forty Days/ Life in a Cuban Prison* (Americas Watch Report, 1986), and Nat Hentoff's "The Sadist as Revolutionary" in *The Village Voice*, July 1, 1986.

85. For information pertaining to Hidalgo Guillén, the reader is referred to *Amnesty International Report 1986*, p. 145.

86. The information in this paragraph has been gleaned from several sources. See *Le Monde* (Paris), January 7, 1984, *L'Express* (Paris), June 15, 1984, and Agence France-Presse dispatches dated October 7, 1983, and August 29, 1986.

87. See *Amnesty International Report 1986*, p. 146.

88. *Miami Herald*, February 1, 1987.

89. In late 1987, a rift developed between Bofill and his former deputy in the Human Rights Commission, Elizardo Sánchez. The latter founded another organization and called it the Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation. The background to the split is unclear, but its impact on the fledgling human rights movement cannot be positive. There is evidence, in the meantime, that the Castro government, stung by the near censure of its record on human rights by the Geneva-based United Nations' Human Rights Commission in June 1987 and eager to avoid a similar or worse outcome in 1988, has shown a bit greater tolerance toward dissidents. For an interesting article on these issues, see Sam Dillon's "The Mystery of Ricardo Bofill" in *The Miami Herald's Tropic Magazine*, February 7, 1988, pp. 9-11 and 14-15.

90. Many governments seek to manipulate economic and social statistics. The



Cuban one is no exception. For instance, in reviewing *Cuba: Desarrollo económico y social durante el período 1958-1980* (Havana: Comité Estatal de Estadísticas, 1981), Carmelo Mesa-Lago shows through concrete examples how comparisons in the book are made unsystematically to "give the illusion of constant improvement." See *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos* (Summer 1983), Vol. XIII, p. 96.

91. Oscar Lewis, Ruth Lewis, and Susan M. Rigdon, *Four Men* (Urbana: University of Illinois press, 1977), p. x.

92. O. Lewis *et al.*, *ibid.*, pp. x-xi.

93. O. Lewis *et al.*, *ibid.*, p. x-xi.

94. O. Lewis *et al.*, *ibid.*, pp. xi-xii. also see Maurice Halperin, *The Taming of Fidel Castro* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 146. Despite the termination of "Project Cuba," Ruth Lewis and Susan Rigdon went on to publish the information they were able to gather in three volumes: *Four Men* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); *Neighbors* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978). The three volumes are subtitled *Living the Revolution: An Oral History of Contemporary Cuba*.

95. See Wayne S. Smith, "Status of Scholarly Exchanges with Cuba" in *Reports of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Task Force on Scholarly Relations with Cuba*, pp. 14-15.

96. See "U.S. Exclusion of Cubans Draws Criticism" in *The Washington Post*, December 12, 1986, p. F2.

97. See the discussion in Wayne S. Smith, *ibid.*, p. 16.

98. Paul Hollander, *Political Hospitality and Tourism: Cuban and Nicaragua* (Washington, D.C.: The Cuban-American National Foundation, 1986), p. 5. Also see Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba 1928-1978* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1981).

99. See Wayne S. Smith, *ibid.*, p. 15. There have also been informal faculty exchanges, but these have usually foundered since Cubans have not been able to travel to the United States.

100. For information in this regard, see Roberto Lozano's "Desarrollo, estructura, funcionamiento e importancia del Departamento de Investigación de los Estados Unidos en la Universidad de la Habana." (Unpublished manuscript, March 1987) A former staff-member at the DISEU, Lozano considers the roots of the rivalry to lie in the very establishment of the DISEU in 1980 and the CEA's consequent displacement as the only quasi-academic institution charged with providing analyses about and organizing exchanges with the United States.

101. See *The Washington Post*, December 12, 1986.

102. See the discussion in Helen Safa, "The LASA-CEA Seminar on Latin American Migration to the United States" in *Reports of the Task Force on Scholarly Relations with Cuba, LASA Forum* (Fall 1986), Vol. XVII, no. 3, pp. 13-14. Safa, a professor at the University of Florida, is Co-Chair of the LASA Task Force on Scholarly Relations with Cuba.

103. *LASA Forum* (Fall 1987), Vol. XVIII, no. 3, pp. 1 and 3.

104. See the statement by Wesley W. Posvar in *Pitt Magazine*, I, no. 4 (November 1986), pp. 6-9. The quote is on p. 8.

105. Conversation with the author on December 22, 1987.

106. See Wayne S. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 15

107. The point has been made at various LASA meetings and is included in numerous resolutions. For a succinct argument, see Wayne S. Smith, *ibid.*, p. 16.

108. See *Granma*, December 2, 1986, pp. 1 and 4-5.

109. *Granma*, *ibid.*

110. *Granma*, *ibid.*

111. *Granma*, *ibid.*

112. See the interview with Alegret by Ariel Terrero Escalante, "Entrevista a Vecino Alegret, Ministro de Educación Superior", *Verde Olivo* (Havana), September 25, 1986, pp. 36-7.

113. *The Miami Herald*, December 8, 1987. A number of young people were arrested but then quickly released on this occasion. Subsequently, in what was a stunning reversal of course, the Cuban government showed the film on national television. Why it do so is open to speculation. Perhaps the terms of the Soviet-Cuban exchange agreement on films prohibited "censorship" of either country's films. An alternative or complementary explanation might argue that the government may also have been trying to dilute the film's social impact by showing it only on television, not in public movie theaters.

114. Reference to this incident is made by one of the participants in a tape recording of a meeting of the Cuban Committee for Human Rights held in Havana in December 1987. A full text has been prepared by *Of Human Rights* in Washington, D.C.

115. For a discussion, see José Alvarez, "The Dying Dialogue Between U.S. and Cuban Scholars" in *Cuban Studies/Estudios Cubanos* (Summer 1984), Vol. XIV, no. 2, pp. 65-8. For a sample of the attacks, see José Luis Rodríguez, "The So-Called Cubanology and Cuban Economic Development". Originally published in *Temas de la Economía Mundial*, (Havana), 7 (1983), pp. 131-153, the article was reprinted in *Cuban Studies* (University of Pittsburgh Press), Vol. XVI (1986), pp. 211-24. One of its targets, Carmelo Mesa-Lago, a distinguished economist at the University of Pittsburgh, replied in the same issue, pp. 225-34. In a subsequent issue, there was a counter-reply which further distorted Mesa-Lago's arguments. See *ibid.*, (1985), no. 16, pp. 10-19. Another scholar whose arguments have been misrepresented and heavily criticized as biased and propagandistic is Jorge I. Domínguez. The "minidebate" between Jorge Domínguez and Hernán Yáñez Quintero is described by José Alvarez in "The Dying Dialogue Between U.S. and Cuban Scholars," *op. cit.*, pp. 64-7.



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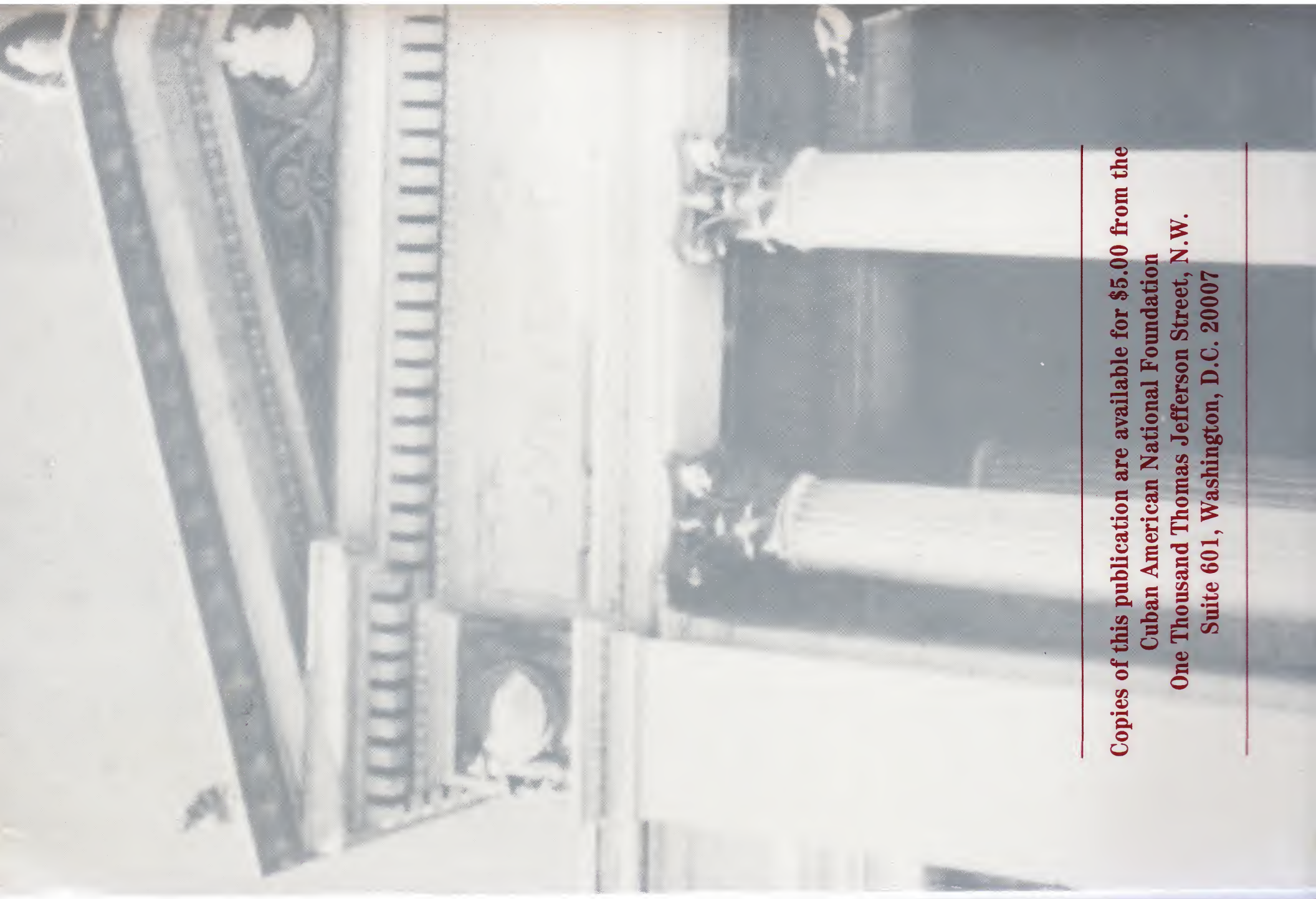
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